

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

Alabama Blacks hit KKK attacks

Eyewitnesses describe cop frame-up of civil rights marchers



Militant/Nelson Blackstock

Cops protect Klan thugs at recent demonstration in Birmingham, Alabama. KKK attack in Decatur is part of statewide pattern of anti-Black violence.

By Nelson Blackstock

DECATUR, Ala.—Blacks have vowed to continue their protests here despite Ku Klux Klan violence and police frame-ups.

An armed assault by Klan members on a May 26 march left two Blacks hospitalized with gunshot wounds. But the cops—who didn't defend the marchers from the KKK—have now arrested Curtis Lee Robinson, a Black, and charged him with attempted murder of a Klansman.

At an evening rally May 28, at the Wayman Chapel AME church, Rev. R.D. Cottonreader placed blame for the attack two days earlier squarely on the police and city officials, who refused to take adequate measures to assure the safety of marchers.

The May 26 march, led by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, marked the first anniversary of the arrest of Tommy Lee Hines. The twenty-three-year-old retarded Black man is now serving thirty years on a frame-up conviction for raping a white woman. He also faces trial on two similar rape charges and a robbery count.

"Law enforcement agencies have no respect for Black rights," Cottonreader said. "We have the right under the constitution to protest."

Cottonreader announced plans to march again on June 9.

"We will not stop until the folks who shot some of us down—and tried to shoot all of us down—are brought to justice," he declared.

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HOW TO HALT NUCLEAR THREAT

Democrats set trap
for antinuclear movement

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Vietnam veterans want their rights

By presidential proclamation, May 28-June 3 was Vietnam Veterans Week.

What a cruel and bitter joke.

Vietnam War veterans have suffered more and deeper problems than the veterans of any previous war working people of this country have been forced to fight in.

Yet the government stonily insists on doing even less for them.

More than 2.5 million GIs served in Vietnam. A million of them saw combat. At least 56,600 were killed.

Returning home, their lives, in countless cases, have been shattered.

The returning veterans—young working people yanked away from their homes and families to fight halfway around the world—were highly vulnerable to the employers' stepped up offensive to drive down our standard of living, which began in the later years of the war.

Tens of thousands of Vietnam vets are jobless—and the unemployment rate for Black Vietnam vets is more than double the rate for whites.

Since Vietnam, the government has cut back drastically on the GI Bill and other benefits. And even these reduced benefits are being eaten away by inflation.

The result is indicated by a single statistic. Vietnam veterans have been able to gain an average college education of less than one year. Thousands did try to go to college on the GI Bill, but the meager subsistence rates soon forced them to drop out.

Jobs and education are just part of the problem they face.

Thousand returned home maimed by Washington's war. Thousands more are now discovering they were poisoned by the Pentagon's cancer-causing Agent Orange, a defoliant used to destroy the Vietnamese countryside.

But the Veterans Administration offers only the most meager medical aid. Hospitals and other facilities are overcrowded and understaffed. A lot of veterans who need medical help just don't bother.

Many Vietnam vets want access to psychological counseling as part of their medical treatment. A bill to fund such a program has

been gathering dust in Congress since 1975.

An estimated 30,000 Vietnam vets are in prison.

These young working people were victims of the genocidal war the U.S. government carried out in Vietnam, just as the Vietnamese people were victims.

They found themselves in a war they had no stake in, a reactionary war of aggression intended to crush a popular movement for national and social liberation.

And then the GIs came home to find that the government, which had tried to use them as cannon fodder, didn't give a damn about their problems. A government that spends billions preparing for new wars treats young working people who came back from Vietnam with contempt, doling out aid with an eyedropper.

That's why the U.S. toll was so much higher than the dead and wounded.

The unions should throw their support to the Vietnam veterans demanding:

- Government training and jobs at union scale.

- A GI bill that provides full higher education with subsidies adequate for a decent living standard;

- Upgrading to honorable discharges of the less-than-honorable discharges given to tens of thousands of GIs. These discharges were always arbitrary, often racist, and sometimes politically motivated.

- Adequate benefits, with cost-of-living escalators, to assure a decent living standard for fully and partially disabled veterans.

Anything less will only perpetuate what one Veterans Week speaker bitterly declared to be "a national disgrace and a moral outrage."

Layoffs & gas crisis

"It's necessary to stop aggravating the problem by blaming one another and by seeking out scapegoats" for the energy crisis, President Carter rebuked the American people May 29.

Carter, of course, was not referring to the fact that working people have been singled out for blame at the same time as they are the victims in the gas shortage. Rather, he is worried that people are more and more directing their anger right where it belongs—at the

oil corporations and the capitalist politicians like Carter, who are helping the monopolies get away with manufacturing the shortages in order to jack up prices.

Among the first layoffs directly attributed to the gas crisis are those in the auto industry. Thus far Chrysler has laid off 13,500, soon to top 20,000, allegedly as a result of the sales slump for big cars or because of plant retooling to produce more fuel-efficient vehicles. Ford has laid off 5,000 workers. Toledo's Jeep workers have been put on alternate week schedules. And the list goes on.

Meanwhile in those plants producing smaller cars, speedup is underway with a vengeance.

Such anarchy in production—alternating forced overtime with heavy layoffs—bolsters the employers' hand in confrontations with the work force. It fosters job insecurity and saps union strength. It is already being pointed to as a possible spirit dampener for those unionists talking strike when the United Auto Workers' contract expires next fall.

Auto workers, who face the same gas lines and soaring prices as everybody else, are thus catching it from both sides.

For labor, the practical solution to this irrational setup should be a fight to shorten the workweek with no cut in pay, creating millions of jobs.

And when Carter harps about "inevitable" gas shortages as he gives the green light for skyrocketing fuel prices, the union movement should call his bluff with a fight to:

Open all the books of the energy trust to public scrutiny. Let committees of unionists and consumers determine the truth about the artificial shortages, hidden profits, and other monopoly swindles.

Nationalize the energy industry. These corporate giants have shown that production ruled by private profit is a formula for disaster. Their proven social irresponsibility points to the need for public ownership of this vital industry.

But capitalist-government bureaucrats are not more trustworthy to run it than the energy barons. Put management in the hands of an independent, elected board responsible to the American people. And call upon the workers in the industry to police its operations and the distribution of fuel.

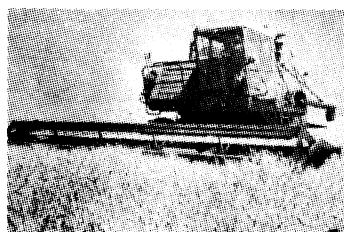
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9-20 International Socialist Review

James P. Cannon, internationalist

This month's 'International Socialist Review' features a speech by Joseph Hansen on the meaning of internationalism and Cannon's contributions to building a worldwide workers party. **Page 11.**



Engels on farmers

Frederick Engels's writings on poor farmers in the nineteenth century hold true for working farmers in the U.S. today. **Page 27.**

25 years after Brown

The 1954 desegregation ruling won by Blacks opened the battle to eliminate Jim Crow. All working people have a stake in continuing the struggle for equal rights. **Page 8.**



Elections in Canada

Government attacks on workers led the unions to carry out a major campaign for Canada's labor party, the New Democratic Party. **Page 7.**



The Militant

Editor: STEVE CLARK
Associate Editors: CINDY JAQUITH
ANDY ROSE
Business Manager: ANDREA BARON

Editorial Staff: Peter Archer, Nancy Cole, Fred Feldman, David Frankel, Suzanne Haig, Osborne Hart, Shelley Kramer, Ivan Licho, August Nimitz, Harry Ring, Dick Roberts, Priscilla Schenk, Arnold Weissberg.

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Ala. Blacks: 'We won't stop!'

Continued from front page

Cottonreader condemned the arrest of Curtis Lee Robinson hours earlier. He charged the police with responding to Klan demands to "arrest a nigger."

The Decatur police have accused Robinson of the attempted murder of Klan leader David Lee Kelso. The KKKer was wounded in shooting during the Klan attack on the Black march.

An official police statement alleged that the Black demonstrators opened fire on the Klansmen, thus triggering a round of Klan and police shooting.

The police allegations were flatly denied by both Cottonreader and Dr. Joseph Lowery, SCLC national president and a leader of the march. No Black marchers were armed, they said.

The *Militant* interviewed two eyewitnesses to the shooting, Howard Hines and Richard Hines, Jr., brothers of Tommy Lee Hines. They saw KKKers open fire on the march.

"About 100 of us were marching from the church into town by the old L&N train station," Richard Hines said, "when we saw the Klan blocking the road. There were about fifty of them. They said, 'ain't no niggers going to come through here.'"

"There were a handful of police standing between them and us," he

explained. The Klansmen broke through the police line.

"That's when some Klans laying in a pickup truck and some cars off to the side started shooting," Howard said.

Richard agreed. The first shots came from the Ku Kluxers sitting in vehicles off to the side.

The two brothers said that following the first shots many of the KKKers produced weapons and began shooting. Some of the policemen also fired shots.

According to press accounts approximately 50 shots were fired during the sixty seconds of shooting.

When the shooting began, both Hines brothers started running.

Howard Hines says he knows the charges against Curtis Lee Robinson are fraudulent. "He was running right beside me, and he didn't have any gun."

When the shooting ended, the march had been broken up.

Later in the day, after the Klan attack, Dr. Lowery and U.S. Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) issued a statement in Birmingham calling for a federal investigation of the failure of the state to provide protection to the demonstrators. Conyers was in Birmingham for a regional meeting of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The following day more than fifty

robed Klansmen marched through the streets of Decatur. One Klansman, Kenneth Duncan of Selma, was arrested for openly carrying a rifle. This is the first time a Klan member has been arrested under a recently passed city ordinance prohibiting weapons at the scene of a demonstration. Other Klansmen reportedly carried concealed weapons. Many openly brandished clubs.

After the shooting the previous day the police arrested a Black man who was in the vicinity, Timothy Guster, and charged him with having a gun. None of the heavily armed Klansmen were arrested under the ordinance that day.

During a KKK rally at city hall, Bill Riccio, state grand chaplain, declared, "we will shed every drop of blood we have here today to return this land to the white race, and by the time we get through with the Jew, the nigger, the communists, they'll be jumping in the ocean and swimming back to Moscow."

Decatur Klan leader Ray Steele proclaimed KKK intentions to block future marches. "If I have to stand by myself, they will not march again in Decatur, Alabama. And we'll never get caught without our weapons again."

Decatur Blacks are determined to continue their fight for Tommy Lee

Hines. There is not the slightest doubt here of his innocence. It is this belief and their outrage at the patently racist frame-up that has powered the protests here.

Howard Hines said of his imprisoned brother, "He didn't go anywhere but to church and school for the retarded. The school bus picked him up and brought him home. He couldn't have done it."

"I couldn't even teach him how to ride a bicycle" said older brother Richard. "How could he drive a car?"

In one of the rape charges against Hines, the assailant is supposed to have driven the victim's car.

Richard said his brother had never had sex relations with any woman.

SCLC is calling for Hines supporters from outside Decatur to come to this Northern Alabama city June 9 to join the march.

Also addressing the rally May 28 was Skip Robinson, leader of the Black United League of Tupelo, Mississippi. Robinson and a number of League members had come to Decatur to show solidarity with the embattled Black community.

For more information on plans for June 9, contact Rev. R.D. Cottonreader at SCLC, 211 8th Ave. N.W., Decatur, Alabama 35601. Telephone: (205) 350-3477.

Mass protests deal blow to censorship in Iran

By Fred Feldman

Iranian workers, farmers, and rank-and-file soldiers continue to stymie efforts by the capitalist Khomeini-Bazargan government to clamp down on their efforts to push the revolution forward.

With unemployment running at nearly 50 percent and inflation rampant, workers are increasingly restive at the failure of the government to improve their economic lot. According to Trotskyists in Iran, strikes and factory occupations continue to be widespread, and the plants and army barracks remain centers of intense political discussion.

The Ayatollah Khomeini and Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan feel pressed to stem the tide of political struggle and debate in order to stabilize capitalist rule in the wake of the February insurrection that toppled the shah.

Some of the regime's attempts to push back democratic rights have been widely publicized in the United States, as part of the capitalist media's campaign to portray the Iranian people as helpless victims of a medieval tyranny. The implied theme of these articles is that the Iranian masses made a terrible mistake in overthrowing the shah.

While reporting on some of Khomeini and Bazargan's initiatives, the media here have almost totally blacked out the response of the working people to these probes.

A good example of this was the recent struggle over freedom of the press. While the regime has established fairly tight control over the government-owned radio and television, some newspapers remain an outlet for dissenting opinion.

On May 10 Khomeini announced he was angry about articles that had been appearing in *Ayendegan*, the national morning paper published in Tehran. Khomeini said he would no longer read the paper and urged others to follow suit.



Abadan workers protesting unemployment. Workers' struggles have blocked Iranian government's efforts to limit dissent, stabilize capitalism.

Ayendegan is a liberal journal that occasionally reports strikes, prints statements by leftist groups, and opens its columns to criticism of the government.

On May 11 Iranian National Radio joined the attack on the press, branding *Ayendegan* and two other papers as "counterrevolutionary."

Armed rightist gangs attacked *Ayendegan's* offices. The paper shut down May 12, after putting out an issue declaring that it would not reopen "until

the Government takes a clear stand for freedom of the press and speech." Except for this statement, the issue was completely blank, in protest against the rightist attacks.

Kayhan and *Ettela'at*, the other major dailies, also carried *Ayendegan's* statement along with blank pages indicating the return of press censorship.

After *Ayendegan* stopped printing, Khomeini-

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Shut down the nukes —how it can be done

By Harry Ring

The anti-nuclear power march in Washington May 6 was an inspiring expression of the scope of antinuclear sentiment in this country. It confirmed that a majority of the American people can be won to the cause of shutting down all the lethal nuclear facilities.

Organized on short notice right after the Three Mile Island disaster, the demonstration drew 125,000 people, far more than expected by the most optimistic. It was indeed a fitting public outcry against what had happened a short time before at Harrisburg.

But not everyone saw it that way.

Gazing out on the huge throng massed at the Capitol, a number of liberal Democratic politicians, and some of their adherents, saw it not as the vanguard of the antinuclear army, but as a potential army of voters and doorbell pushers in the 1980 elections.

One example of this cynical response was an assessment of the demonstration in the May 14 issue of New York's liberal Democratic weekly, the *Village Voice*. To the writers, Alexander Cockburn and James Ridgeway, the huge gathering was little more than a recruiting ground for the Democrats.

They wrote approvingly: "The thought occurred to many in Washington that day: If this sort of political event could be put together in three weeks, then the creation of a national political campaign seemed to be well within the bounds of possibility."

They weren't the only ones who sized it up that way. Declared Rep. Morris Udall (D-Ariz.), "The potential is there for making nuclear power the centerpiece of American politics in 1980."

Brown in forefront?

California's Gov. Jerry Brown thought so too. A presidential hopeful, he flew in for the rally, modestly declaring, "I'm in the forefront of the antinuclear movement."

Brown is the governor whose "small is beautiful" speeches provide the esthetic backdrop for slashing aid to the ill, the elderly, and impoverished in his state.

This is apparently becoming known to additional layers of people, as indicated by the surprisingly broad chorus of boos that greeted him at the rally. And the dead silence that met his double-talking declaration in favor of a moratorium on *new* nuclear plants, instead of shutting down all existing plants immediately.

Some of those who saw the demonstration as a means of wheeling

and dealing in the Democratic Party apparently took a more benign view of Brown. Particularly those who saw him as a stalking-horse, witting or not, for their choice, Sen. Edward Kennedy.

The *Voice* article described the meeting between President Carter and a half-dozen of the protest initiators the day after the demonstration.

The *Voice* was particularly intrigued with the thought expressed at the meeting by Sam Lovejoy of Massachusetts, a founder of the Clamshell Alliance.

Lovejoy, the article said, "pointed out that the political atmosphere following the demonstration . . . was starkly reminiscent of a political turning point 11 years ago.

"In the winter of 1968, Gene McCarthy seized the initiative provided by the antiwar protests in that year, and by March had toppled Lyndon Johnson in New Hampshire and driven him from the White House.

"Some months later, Bobby Kennedy had begun his own drive for the nomination. A similar situation, said Lovejoy, exists today. . . .

"Just as McCarthy made the antiwar movement his base in New Hampshire, so today could Jerry Brown use the antinuclear movement as a base in New England; and the result of Brown's victory would be followed, in all likelihood, by the decisive entry of Teddy Kennedy."

Rube Goldberg contraption

That may sound like a political version of a convoluted Rube Goldberg contraption. You mass 125,000 people in Washington to provide Jerry Brown with the basis for defeating Carter in the New England primaries. And that in turn opens the door for Kennedy taking the nomination.

And if that doesn't scare Carter into "modifying" his hard pronuke stance, there's the ultimate threat:

"The longer he [Carter] proceeds on this road," Cockburn and Ridgeway darkly warn, the greater the chances . . . that the eventual victor will be a Republican."

Anyone who seriously argues that this kind of "strategy" will shut down the nuclear plants in this country is either very naïve, or an old-fashioned political rascal.

Antiwar demonstrations contributed greatly to forcing the U.S. government out of Vietnam. But not by providing a vote-hustling pool for Eugene McCarthy. McCarthy's drive to get people off the streets and into Democratic party activity didn't help build the antiwar movement; it was a diversion from it.

The antiwar movement was successful precisely because it was not co-opted and destroyed by the capitalist politicians.

Because antiwar activists refused to compromise on their demand to bring all U.S. troops home, and because they relied on reaching out to the broadest layers of the population possible and not on politicians' promises, the antiwar struggle effectively blocked the U.S. war drive.

Its education and action campaign finally won a majority of American working people—including many active-duty GIs. And that was instrumental in forcing an end to the aggression in Vietnam.

The point is valid today. The antinuclear movement must win a majority of the American working people. But it would be effectively diverted from doing that if it fell victim to dependence on capitalist politicians to stop nuclear power.

Both the Republicans and

Democrats, and all their contending candidates, are committed to the ruling rich. And the ruling rich are committed to the continued development of nuclear power.

That's why Carter told the post-demonstration delegation that there was no way he could shut down the nuclear plants.

That's why Jerry Brown talks about a "moratorium"—at best, promising possible postponement of new plants while keeping the present ones going.

That's why Edward Kennedy sent a message to the May 6 rally: "A national reassessment is under way in Congress and the nation to determine whether any additional commitments to nuclear power should be made. I am glad to be part of that reassessment. . . ."

Is that what's needed?

There are today already seventy-two nuclear plants licensed to operate in this country. Three Mile Island underscored what it will mean if just one of them goes.

Massive fatalities

Well before Three Mile Island, an almost-buried government report conceded that a meltdown at one of the plants would mean some 45,000 dead, another 100,000 afflicted, plus the countless fatalities that would come in the years to follow.

And that's not to speak of the plants that operate "safely." All nuclear plants emit a low-level radiation that, despite government and industry claims to the contrary, causes cancer.

Further, there is the enormous problem for countless generations to come of the steadily accumulating lethal waste. There is presently no safe means of disposal of this waste and no one has a clue as to whether such means will ever be found.

Even if the major party politicians were serious about a "moratorium" on new construction—and were not just engaging in preelection rhetoric—can we afford to live with the present seventy-two time bombs?

And add to that the other awesome threat to human survival, the nuclear weapons stockpile.

It's worth noting in this respect that none of the politicians who are so happy to "associate" themselves with the antinuclear movement even refer to the problem of nuclear weapons.

This is also why some figures within the movement oppose fighting against both—that is, to shut down the nuclear power plants, and eliminate nuclear weapons too.

They argue that to also address the problem of nuclear weapons would "narrow" the movement. But what really concerns them is that raising the issue is embarrassing for their liberal Democratic mentors who won't touch the weapons issue at all.

Who will get it done?

If both the Republicans and Democrats are against shutting down the nuclear plants, who will get it done?

The answer is not really difficult: organized labor.

There are 22 million union members in this country, including most of the workers in basic industry—steel, auto, rail, transportation, mining. Together they wield an enormous social power, the kind that's needed to shut down those nukes.

Can the unions be brought into the antinuclear struggle?

We have only to look at the big changes in American labor and the world since the Vietnam War.

The economic difficulties of capitalism have gotten qualitatively worse.

In addition, the U.S. rulers face mounting resistance from workers and oppressed masses around the world—from Iran to Africa to Nicaragua and El Salvador to Indochina.

And they face rising militant opposition from labor at home.

The employers' antilabor offensive is deepgoing. In the face of rising inflation, the Carter administration is trying to impose wage "restraints," which mean deep cuts in real wages.

Union rights are being hammered away at. There are more direct union-busting assaults, such as the savage attack on Steelworkers at Newport News, Virginia.

But there is also mounting labor resistance.

Two years ago, the United Mine Workers struck for 110 days for their demands. Three times the president of the United States ordered them back to work and three times they told him where to go.

Since then there have been major strikes by rail workers and postal workers, Teamsters and rubber workers, and more.

The union fightback has been given an added dimension by the impact of the civil rights movement and the fight for women's rights.

Civil rights and women's committees are developing in such powerful unions as the United Steelworkers. Many of these committees are sparking the union fight against the *Weber* decision, which would scrap affirmative-action gains for women and minority workers.

Unions moving against nukes

And, particularly since Three Mile Island, unions are getting into the fight against nuclear power. Unionists are coming to recognize they have a major stake in the fight.

William Winpisinger, president of the 653,000-member International Association of Machinists, was a principal speaker at the May 6 Washington rally.

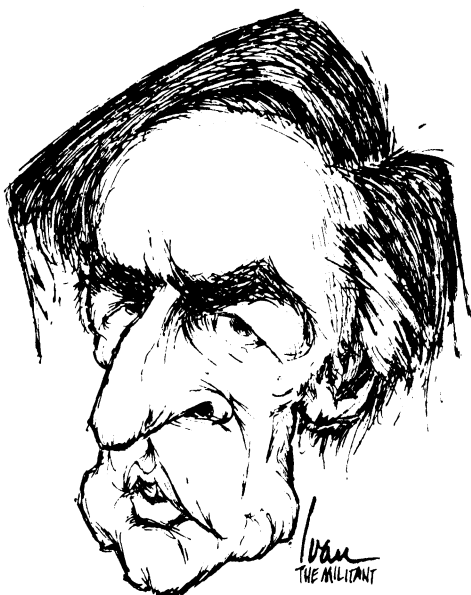
An impressive number of local unions and officials have given their support to the June 2-3 demonstrations around the country, including steel and auto locals.

Resolutions against nuclear power have been passed in a number of rail and machinist locals.

And the United Mine Workers union has called for increasing use of coal to end reliance on the deadly nuclear plants.

The UMWA stand is of cardinal importance for the antinuclear fight.

To be effective, the antinuclear



Jerry Brown would like antinuke vote.

Books on nuclear power

Nuclear Power by Walter Patterson
Penguin Books, 302 pp., \$3.50

The Poverty of Power by Barry Commoner
Bantam Books, 297 pp., \$2.75

The Silent Bomb, ed. Peter Faulkner
Vintage, 382 pp., \$3.95

We Almost Lost Detroit by John G. Fuller
Ballantine, 288 pp., \$1.95

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Union demonstrator in D.C. May 6. Labor has the power to shut down nukes.

movement must be able to counterpose a feasible alternative to nuclear power. Coal is that feasible alternative.

There is enough coal to last hundreds of years. There are thousands of unemployed coal miners ready and waiting to mine it. And there is a powerful union that can be mobilized to fight for the coal alternative, giving impetus to the involvement of the labor movement as a whole in the antinuclear struggle.

Deepening the involvement of the unions must be at the center of the activity of the antinuclear movement today.

The antinuclear alliances can do invaluable work in aiding this process. Educational materials are needed that deal with the issues that are key to working people. Printed literature, presentations at union meetings, and other means can be used to get out the facts on such central questions as jobs, the energy crisis, and the general issue of the dangers of nuclear power.

Union activists already involved in the fight against nukes need to persist in bringing the issue to their shopmates, at union gatherings and at the workplace.

And as labor becomes more deeply involved in the movement, this will prove a great attractive power for others who will be inspired by seeing this kind of force entering the battle.

Democrats a dead end

But these things will not happen if the antinuclear movement is led into the dead end of Democratic Party politics.

The last thing the most "concerned" capitalist politician wants is the involvement of labor as an independent force in the antinuclear movement.

The nuclear threat we live with today is but one part of the deepening social crisis that threatens from all sides. The list is long: the war danger; ravaging inflation; the assault on hard-won union gains; racism; discrimination against women; the poisoning of the environment.

The Republicans and Democrats represent and perpetuate the capitalist system responsible for this grotesque package of social evils. They are part of the problem, not the solution. And that includes the double-talking Kennedys and Browns.

The labor movement has the social power not only to end nuclear power, but also to provide a political alternative in the electoral arena. Labor's involvement in the antinuclear movement is one important way of helping that happen.

In his speech at the Washington rally, environmentalist Barry Commoner assailed the Democratic and Republican parties for being unresponsive to the needs of the country.

But saying that without explaining why begs the question.

The problem is not that these parties are deaf. They don't give a damn. They are beholden to big business, not to its victims.

A new party is needed in this country that is responsive to the needs of the majority. Such a party must be one that has no stake in this system.

Labor can build that kind of a party. A fighting labor party, based on the trade unions, could address itself to all of our problems.

That kind of a labor party would have no stake in keeping those nuclear time bombs ticking.

Think about how counterproductive it will be for the unions, for the antinuclear movement, for other socially concerned forces to get into the 1980 capitalist party merry-go-round. Wouldn't it be a giant step forward if in 1980 even a few local union bodies decided to make a start toward building a labor party by running their own candidates?

That would really move us down the road to no nukes.

We need a working-class strategy to fight the nuclear gang. And that, in turn, will advance the fight to abolish the whole bankrupt system and to establish a workers government that will begin building a safe, peaceful, socialist society.

Va. shipyard workers fight nuclear job risk

By Jon Hillson

NEWPORT NEWS, Va.—Nearly 100 members of United Steelworkers Local 8888 picketed the Norfolk Naval Shipyard May 19. The Steelworkers work at the nearby Newport News shipyard, where they recently suspended their strike for union recognition.

The Newport News workers turned out in neighboring Portsmouth, where the Norfolk yard is located, to demonstrate their solidarity with the Metal Trades Council there. The metal unions are waging a fight in defense of two shipyard workers who have refused to do nuclear work.

The two workers are being threatened with dismissal if they continue to defy the shipyard management.

"I don't want to work around radiation," one of the workers told local reporters a month ago when the controversy broke out. "I've told my supervisors time and time again that I'm afraid of it and they just ignore me."

A third worker, who feels the same way, was forced by supervisors to sign a form that states he "volunteered" to perform nuclear work.

"The supervisor said that if he didn't sign it," reported one Norfolk worker, "he would call base police right then and there and have him thrown out of the shipyard."

Yard supervisors threatened employees with job dismissal if they joined the May 19 picket line.

The Metal Trades Council, which brought pickets to Newport News to march alongside Local 8888 members during their strike, asked the Steelworkers for help. Local 8888 "jumped at the chance," said Steelworkers District 35 Sub-director Jack Hower.

Both shipyards conduct nuclear work in or around vessels powered by reactors. The dangers of such work were exposed last year in an investigation by the *Boston Globe*.

The newspaper study found that the cancer rate among workers at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, was more than double the national average. The leukemia death rate was more than 450 percent higher than the national average.

Last year a unionist in the Norfolk Naval Shipyard won a leukemia claim against management, and another filed last June is still pending.

The navy shipyard's commander, Capt. Alfred Kurznhauser, is not about to let health considerations get in the way of work, whether employees are civilian or military. "No one is forced to be hired here," Kurznhauser informed the workers. "Once they are employees, they are expected to perform the full range of their job duties."

Nor does the captain believe working people—whose taxes pay for the yard—have the right to know the truth about nuclear hazards.

"Public controversy on internal matters serves only to reduce the professional image of the shipyarder," said Kurznhauser, "and does not serve to promote the health of the shipyard, now and in the future."

But public interest in and opposition to the nuclear danger is growing—particularly in the wake of the Three Mile Island accident near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

News of the first nuclear-related compensation claims against the Tenneco-owned Newport News shipyard broke on May 18.

Steven Somervill died of leukemia March 2. His family contends that his four and a half years as a measurer of radioactivity in nuclear submarines cost him his life.

The second suit was filed by Olvin Ferguson, a nuclear shipfitter. Last November, after a routine blood test, the thirty-two-year-old worker discovered he had leukemia.

According to federal standards, neither Somervill nor Ferguson were exposed to hazardous levels of radiation. The government's lax standards help the nuclear industry get away with murder.

Getting at the truth about job dangers—and making work safe in the shipyard—is a high priority for Local 8888. As the union reorganizes inside the yard, establishing a safety committee with teeth is right at the top of its agenda.

Cuban exile terrorists threaten Miami SWP

By Jack Lieberman

MIAMI—The terror campaign by right-wing Cuban exiles who are attempting to stop all contact between the revolutionary government of Cuba and the Cuban community abroad continued here May 23 with a bomb threat against the Miami Socialist Workers Party.

A group calling itself the "Front for Cuban Organization" phoned the SWP, a local TV station, and the *Miami News*, claiming that a bomb had been planted at the SWP headquarters and was due to go off immediately.

Fortunately, no bomb was found. But Cuban community leaders and civil libertarians at a May 25 news conference at the SWP headquarters linked the bomb threat to a wave of terrorist attacks.

The violence occurs in the context of the Carter administration's continuing threats against the Cuban revolution. Neither federal nor local cops have lifted a finger to apprehend the right-wing terrorists.

On April 26 Carlos Muñiz, a founder of the Antonio Maceo Brigade and an organizer of tours to Cuba, was shot to death in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The right-wing murderers promised that

others who travel to Cuba or promote such travel would also be assassinated.

On May 3, Rev. Manuel Espinosa, a leader of the Cuban community who has been a prominent advocate of closer ties with Cuba, was the target of an assassination attempt. And on May 18, shots were fired into Espinosa's church in Hialeah.

"These terrorist actions represent an attack on the fundamental right of all Americans to voice their opinions," SWP leader Sharon Cabaniss declared at the news conference.

Cabaniss demanded that Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre "make an aggressive and systematic effort to apprehend and prosecute these terrorists."

Andrés Gómez, representing the Antonio Maceo Brigade, stated that threats and violence have no place in a democratic society.

Albor Ruiz, speaking for the "Committee of 75," which participated in the first dialogue between the Castro government and Cubans abroad, stated the determination of his group to continue to promote travel between the United States and Cuba.

Eleanor Ginsberg, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union here, and Rev. Wayne Lever of the Christian Community Services Agency, also spoke.

'Public wants truth about gas crisis'

Socialist oil worker in race for Houston mayor

By Susie Winsten

HOUSTON—Although Houston is the nation's oil refining capital, working people here are suffering from the same long lines and short hours that are occurring at gas stations across the country. And the same high prices. And the same politicians telling us to drive less and pay more because there just isn't enough gasoline to go around.

Many Houstonians, however, when they turned on their television sets May 24 for the evening news, got to hear a different explanation of the gasoline shortage.

"As an oil refinery worker, I know something firsthand about the energy hoax . . . and the profits the oil companies are making," said Debby Leonard, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Houston, at a well-attended news conference announcing her campaign.

"There is no shortage of crude oil, but the oil companies are creating a gasoline shortage to drive up prices and take full advantage of government decontrol.

"At the refinery where I work, the pipelines are full, crude storage tanks are overflowing, the docks are full of tankers and barges, and the company is renting storage tanks at other facilities. But the gasoline producing units at the refinery are operating at a reduced rate—a rate barely sufficient to keep them on stream."

Leonard has worked at Atlantic Richfield Company's Houston Refinery for five years, and is an active member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union Local 4-227.

The right of working people to know the truth about the gas ripoff is a theme of her mayoral campaign. Leonard told the reporters assembled at her news conference:

"I think it is very important—and a lot of my co-workers think it is very important—that the public know what



'Where I work, pipelines are full, storage tanks are overflowing, but gasoline producing units are operating at a reduced rate,' Leonard told reporters.

is going on in the refineries.

"The public should know about the abundance of crude oil and the lack of gasoline production. The oil companies' records need to be opened to public scrutiny.

"Even refinery workers are not equipped with all the facts we need to have. While we can see what is happening at the refineries, we have no access to the real figures on anything—from inventories to profits.

"I would like to urge all of you as representatives of the press to ask ARCO to let you into their refinery. I'd be happy to show you around."

Leonard reports that refinery workers are "beseiged by requests" from friends and neighbors wanting to know the true gasoline situation. And people want to know one other thing—why the shortage is happening and what can be done about it.

In her campaign for mayor, Leonard is putting forward a program the labor

movement can use to fight and expose the contrived energy crisis.

"The oil corporations monopolize the entire energy industry. ARCO, for example, owns oil, gas, petroleum products, coal, uranium, and much, much more.

"The energy industry," says Leonard, "should be taken out of the hands of the private profiteers. In order for us to find out the real truth, the energy industry should be nationalized and placed under public ownership."

Leonard's co-workers at the ARCO refinery are frustrated by the knowledge that people desperately need gas but the oil trust refuses to increase gas production.

If the energy industry were publicly owned, she explains, the decisions as to what and how much to produce would be made by a board directly elected by and responsible to the American people. This would not be a board

composed of so-called impartial government administrators, who always side with the company. All its records and decisions would be policed by the workers in the energy industry itself.

"You wouldn't be forced to lower the feed rate when everyone desperately needed gasoline or heating oil," Leonard explains to co-workers. "We would make sure that the figures on production released by this board agreed with what we saw with our own eyes on the job."

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers was the first victim of Carter's 7 percent wage guideline. Oil workers have also had a firsthand view of the energy hoax. There is growing discussion in OCAW about what political steps the labor movement should take to defend working people.

OCAW District 4 Council President Leo Reidel urges unions to elect delegates to the Democratic national convention. He says a third political party is not "practical" and that "the answer is not just having a vehicle called a Labor Party. . . ."

Leonard disagrees. "OCAW could lead the way in taking on the corporations by fielding independent labor candidates and initiating the idea in the labor movement of a party based on the power of the unions—a labor party.

"The owners of Exxon, Shell, ARCO, and all the rest already have their own parties. We, who can barely afford to buy the gasoline that we ourselves produce, have the responsibility to promote the idea of labor action independent of the profiteering Democrats and Republicans."

During the first week of June, supporters of Leonard's campaign will begin a drive to collect 3,500 signatures to place her name on the November ballot. This is twice the legally required number.

Tenneco appeals pro-Steelworker ruling

By Jon Hillson

NEWPORT NEWS, Va.—Tenneco waited until the very last moment to file its "exceptions" to the recommendation by a National Labor Relations Board judge that the Steelworkers be recognized at the shipyard here.

Before the May 25 deadline expired, Tenneco was joined in a separate appeal by the Peninsula Shipbuilders Association, the company union defeated by the United Steelworkers in a representation election at the Newport News shipyard in January 1978.

The bosses and the PSA hold that the elections should be thrown out because of the alleged presence of two or three dozen blank ballots around shipyard polling places.

Inside the shipyard, Tenneco's trusted pal, the PSA, is completely discredited. Under the pressure of "voluntary" ten-hour days, six-day workweeks, and the freezing of vacation time, however, the PSA has started "talking tough" against shipyard brass.

The company union claimed in a leaflet that Tenneco wouldn't dare to impose such conditions if the PSA were the yard's bargaining agent. It also blames the Steelworkers' union for allowing the bosses to carry out the speedup.

The PSA mustered five diehards to hand out this leaflet May 23 at shipyard gates in the early morning hours.

Nearly 200 USWA Local 8888

members gathered around the PSAers, debating them in front of workers passing through the gates. No one came to the PSA's defense.

This lineup of forces inside the yard and the continuing organization and growth of the union shows that Tenneco's victimizations of the Steelworkers—suspensions, firings, segregation of union members, harassment—is not having its desired effect.

At the same time, local courts are helping Tenneco screen out union militants. The shipyard has a standing policy to fire any worker convicted on strike-related charges.

On May 22, two Steelworkers were socked with suspended sentences and

fined for misdemeanor convictions.

On May 23, two more Local 8888 members were sentenced to two and three months in jail in addition to receiving fines and suspended sentences for supposedly placing nails on a public road. All the Steelworkers are appealing the convictions.

Even these kangaroo courts, however, have felt the pressure of the union. On May 22, besides the unionists that were convicted, thirteen others were either acquitted or had the charges against them dropped.

Sixty-three Steelworkers arrested on April 16, the day of the bloody police riot here, are still to be tried starting in late June.

...Iran

Continued from page 3

Bazargan forces moved in on the most widely read national daily, *Kayhan*. A rightist Islamic group that dominates *Kayhan*'s printing workers blocked twenty journalists they called "leftists" from entering the offices. In protest, all the paper's journalists struck. A new "Islamic" *Kayhan* appeared, containing only classified ads and government press releases.

And this is where the capitalist media in this country dropped the story.

Ayendegan's appeals to the government to stop the attack on the press fell on deaf ears. But the Iranian workers and their allies took a hand in the matter. They recognized the attack on *Ayendegan* and the other papers as a challenge to their right to read, write, and speak as they like—rights they risked their lives to win in battle against the shah.

About 600,000 copies of the May 12 *Ayendegan*—

containing only the protest against censorship—were sold. The paper's normal circulation is 300,000.

Denunciations of the moves to censor the press were issued by Kurdish and Turkmeni organizations.

The Democratic National Front, a liberal capitalist formation, called for a rally at Tehran University on May 19. The rally, although inspired by the attacks on press freedom, was organized as a memorial to Mohammad Mossadeq, the liberal nationalist leader whose government was toppled by a CIA-organized coup in 1953.

The Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS—Hezb-e Kargar-e Sosialist) published a special issue of *Worker* (*Kargar*). Its front-page headline called for the government and rightists to keep hands off the press. It reiterated the Trotskyists' call for immediate free elections of a constituent assembly.

The issue sold quickly and workers on the street and in factories responded favorably to its call to

defend democratic rights. Some bus drivers pasted the front page to their bus windows as they drove through the city.

The gathering on Saturday, May 19, drew about 100,000 people, many of them from working-class districts of Tehran. About fifty club-swinging rightist thugs attacked the rally but were unable to disrupt it.

The Trotskyists sold 10,000 copies of the special issue of *Worker* at the rally—all that remained of an edition of 30,000.

After the meeting, press freedom was widely discussed throughout Tehran.

By Monday, *Ayendegan* was publishing again without interference and with no change in its editorial policy. Khomeini's forces have issued no further calls for action against the press as yet.

Kayhan remains under rightist control, but leaders of the HKS regard the net effect of the battle as a show of strength for the workers and a blow to the government's antidemocratic drive.

Labor party gains in Canadian election

By David Frankel

Canadians went to the polls May 22 to elect a new federal government. After eleven years as prime minister, Liberal Party leader Pierre Trudeau was replaced by the Conservative Party's Joe Clark.

More important than the switch from one capitalist ruling party to another, however, was the trade-union campaign for the New Democratic Party, Canada's labor party. The NDP won more than 2 million votes—18 percent of the total—and went from seventeen seats in Parliament to twenty-six.

The swing to the NDP reflected the developing class polarization in Canada. The Canadian ruling class, just like the American ruling class, has tried to force working people to bear the burden of the capitalist economic crisis.

Under Trudeau's wage-control policy, industrial workers have lost almost eleven dollars of their weekly purchasing power since 1977. At the same time, unemployment has hit the highest levels since the 1930s, and inflation shows no sign of slowing down.

As a result, the class struggle in Canada has been heating up. The most important examples of this are the hard-fought strikes by the Inco nickel miners in Sudbury, Ontario, and by the copper miners in Murdochville, Québec.

Pressures from the union ranks forced the leaders of the Canadian Labour Congress to actively campaign for the NDP for the first time since the party's formation in the early 1960s.

Answering the argument that the Liberals are "friends of labor," CLC President Dennis McDermott said in the April 27 issue of *Canadian Labour*, "It's a strange friend indeed who blames you for inflation, freezes your wages and gives three billion



Trade unionists in March 1976 protest against wage controls. Pressure from ranks forced union heads to throw their weight behind New Democratic Party in recent elections.

Gov't jails head of postal union

On May 7, in the middle of the Canadian election campaign, the capitalist government revealed its real plans for the working class by sentencing postal union leader Jean-Claude Parrot to three months in jail.

Parrot, the head of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, was sentenced because his union defied the Trudeau government with a nationwide strike last fall. As the sentencing judge frankly stated, he hoped his action would serve to "deter others from the reprehensible act of defying Parliament."

Postal workers responded to the sentencing of Parrot with picket lines in Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Regina, Saskatoon, and other cities across the country.

At a rally in Edmonton May 12, Parrot declared that despite his victimization, "postal workers are not going to stop fighting for their rights."

dollars in tax credits to your employers, in a short three-year period. That is precisely what the Liberals have done since 1975. . . ."

McDermott continued: "In this election year, the labour movement is committed to all-out support for the NDP. Take a look around you in the supermarket, at the gas pump, in the kitchen and all around the house. The facts will tell you: there is no other way."

In the May 10 provincial election in British Columbia, the NDP took 45.9 percent of the vote, only 2.5 percent behind the ruling right-wing Social Credit Party.

Commenting on the evidence provided by the vote, Conservative Party leader Vic Stephens complained: "The polarization [in British Columbia] is much deeper and more strongly entrenched than ever."

In the federal elections, the NDP vote in British Columbia went from 23 percent in 1974 to 31.6 percent. In the Maritime provinces, the NDP vote was roughly double the 1974 total, going from 9.5 percent to 21.4 percent in Newfoundland.

The NDP took 22 percent of the vote in Ontario, Canada's most populous province. That was a gain of 3 percent over 1974.

In Québec the Liberals were able to retain their traditional hold, winning sixty-seven of the seventy-five seats, despite the fact that Trudeau made opposition to Québec self-determination one of the main points of his campaign. The Conservatives won two seats and the Social Credit Party six.

While the NDP's vote in Québec declined to 5.3 percent, from 6.6 percent in 1974, the party received significant labor backing. Thirty-four of the

seventy-three NDP candidates in Québec were trade unionists, and one was a working farmer. The Québec Federation of Labor, which includes the major industrial unions such as the Steelworkers and United Auto Workers, endorsed the NDP campaign and put out literature in French to back it.

Overall, not only did the NDP win a bigger vote in this election, it also won a more class-conscious vote than before. In Ontario, the CLC sponsored ads asking, "Would you elect your boss as shop steward? Don't scab at the ballot box."

Local unions distributed campaign material for the NDP at plant gates, on the shop floor, and in working-class neighborhoods. In some areas meetings of shop stewards, local officials, and union activists were held. The result, despite the political weaknesses of the NDP campaign, was heightened political discussion and political awareness in the plants and among broad layers of the working class.

This will present problems for the new government. Clark heads a minority government, with 136 seats in Parliament out of 282.

Moreover, although they won the most seats, the Conservatives came in second in the popular vote, taking 4 million (36 percent) to 4.5 million (40 percent) for the Liberals.

Canadian Trotskyists in the Revolutionary Workers League/Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire ran six candidates, in Montreal, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Vancouver. They called for the formation of a labor party in Québec, and a vote for the NDP in English Canada, while counterposing a class-struggle program to the reformist perspective of the current NDP leadership.

Stakes high for working people in Inco strike

The following is excerpted from an article that appeared in the May 21 'Socialist Voice,' the English-language newspaper of the Canadian Revolutionary Workers League/Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire.

By John Steele

SUDBURY, Ontario—In union voting May 12, Inco miners, members of United Steelworkers Local 6500, voted down a new contract proposed by their bargaining committee. In a 90 percent

giant nickel operation shut down significantly raises the stakes in this eight month strike. The outcome will effect the lives of working people from one end of the country to the other.

"We've got to keep on fighting," Hendrick Demeester, a worker at the Clarabell Mill told us after the vote count was announced. "In one or two months we can get a better deal."

Tom and Joanne White along with their son William drove up to the Local 6500 hall in their camper to get the vote results. White works at the South mine. "Now Inco knows who's boss in this town," said White. "The contract was good, but it wasn't good enough after an eight month strike."

"Let's face it. We're fighting against the biggest company and we had to put our foot down. We should have done it a long time ago. Inco wanted a strike. They got a strike, but now we've got them. They have to bargain to us now."

White expressed the sentiment of most of the workers who gathered in groups during the day in front of the Steelworkers' hall on Froid Ave. to discuss the pros and cons of the con-

tract.

"The weather is better. We don't have gas bills and Inco is hurting," one miner explained. "The way I see it we have to show the company we don't have to be at their mercy every time," he said.

Others explained that the key issues were pensions, adequate cost-of-living protection and vacation improvements.

"I'm going inside to do some reading and make up my own mind," an Inco veteran of over 39 years told us. He said the younger and older workers were united in fighting for decent pensions and cost of living protection even though "oldtimers" like himself were most concerned about the pensions.

Week of discussion

During the week before the vote the proposed contract was at the center of discussion everywhere. Early in the week Local 6500 stewards overwhelmingly rejected the contract. A similar position was taken by the influential Wives Supporting the Strike committee.

Discussion even took place in some schools. "My teacher asked us if we thought our dads should go back or stay out," a ten year old striker's son told us as he waited for his father to finish voting. "Some kids thought they should go back and other kids thought they should stay out but we can get along if they stay out," he said.

Over the week about 1,700 of the 11,700 Local 6500 members met in three separate meetings to discuss the contract. Other discussions took place in the homes, pubs, and restaurants throughout Sudbury and the surrounding area.

Voting on the contract ended by 6:00 p.m. Tension mounted as the ballot boxes were brought into the Steelworkers' hall from voting stations around Sudbury.

About 8:00 p.m. the count was announced. Downstairs in the union pub Inco workers, wives and husbands, cheered, raised fists and sang Solidarity Forever and We Shall Not Be Moved.

The fighting solidarity of Local 6500
Continued on next page

turnout, 5,463 (57 percent) voted to reject the contract and 4,058 voted to accept.

The miners' decision to keep the

Fight goes on 25 years later

1954 Brown school-desegregation decision

By August Nimtz

Twenty-five years ago the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racially segregated schools were inherently unequal and a violation of the constitutional rights of Black Americans. The ruling in the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas*, marked the formal recognition by the highest judicial body that Blacks had a right to equal educational opportunities.

Until then, schools—and many other public facilities—had been segregated by law in much of the South, and by racist custom in much of the rest of the country. Until 1954, courts upheld this on the grounds that such facilities were “separate but equal.” Of course, the justices knew this was a legal fraud, since segregation was forced on Blacks after the Civil War precisely to relegate them to inferior education, jobs, and social status. The miserable conditions imposed on Blacks were then used to pull down the conditions of all working people, and to ensure their division in the face of the capitalist exploiters.

The Court reversed this stand in 1954 because changed world conditions made direct federal support to Jim Crow segregation increasingly counter-productive for the ruling class. Blacks were beginning to assert their right to equality and Africans, Asians, and other colonial peoples were winning independence.

Jim Crow was demaging imperialism's image abroad.

Dean Acheson, Secretary of State until 1953 in the Truman administration, told the Supreme Court that legal school segregation was harming U.S. foreign policy.

Even after the *Brown* decision, the federal government was in no hurry to put an end to Jim Crow in education. It took struggles by Black communities in places like Clinton, Tennessee, and Little Rock, Arkansas—and the world attention these battles received—to get the U.S. government to enforce school desegregation.

As a result of these struggles, Black people, while still subject to racist discrimination from cradle to grave, greatly improved their chances of getting a decent education and the improved job opportunities that come with it. Ultimately, it opened the college gates to unprecedented numbers of Blacks through struggles for affirmative action and open admissions. It also improved the educational opportunities for other oppressed minorities, women and the working class as a whole.

A recent study, according to the *New York Times*, May 9, reports that only 17 percent of Black and other minority students across the nation attend what are called segregated schools—schools with 99 to 100 percent minority enroll-



It took federal troops to enforce school desegregation in Little Rock in 1957, three years after Supreme Court decision.

ment. In 1968 the figure was 53 percent.

The Court's ruling has had its greatest impact where it was intended—in the southern states. In 1968 in the South 75 percent of Black students attended segregated schools. Today the figure is about 12 percent. In the North the figures are, respectively, 36 and 31 percent.

A year after the 1954 decision, a Black woman named Rosa Parks refused to take a seat in the back of a Montgomery, Alabama, bus as city ordinances then required Blacks to do. Her action sparked a bus boycott, the opening of the civil rights movement.

The sit-ins and mass demonstrations of the next decade led to the downfall of legal Jim Crow segregation in the South, won southern Blacks the right to vote (formally guaranteed in the Constitution since 1870), and dealt a severe blow to the legitimacy of racism.

Many white working people learned to support the struggle for equality and to respect Blacks as people capable of fighting for and winning their rights.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Black people led the way in improving the conditions of all working people.

But these gains didn't win the battle for equality. They only began it. And when the capitalist rulers of this country found themselves in an economic squeeze in the 1970s, they decided on an offensive to roll back the gains of working people. They put a premium on reinforcing and extending racist discrimination and racist ideology, since the oppression of Black people is

a major source of profits for the ruling rich.

Since equal educational opportunity is so basic to full equality for Blacks, it isn't surprising that the racist offensive fired some of its first salvos at the progress that was being made in school desegregation. The immediate aim was to freeze the desegregation process.

A 1974 Supreme Court decision barred busing across school district lines, legitimizing the de facto segregation that characterizes most metropolitan areas. A few months later in Boston, racist mobs attacked Black children in an effort to block busing. And they won public expressions of sympathy from capitalist politicians ranging from Mayor Kevin White to President Ford.

The Supreme Court now says that Blacks have to prove not only that schools are segregated, but that school boards intentionally practice segregation.

To support such rulings, the rulers are trying to sell the myth that enough—perhaps too much—has been done to remedy the history of segregated schools. In fact, true integration has yet to be achieved. The same study in the *New York Times* reports that 31 percent of Black and other nonwhite students attend predominantly minority schools throughout the country. In northern states it was as high as 51 percent.

Another serious blow was the Supreme Court's *Bakke* decision, which provided a constitutional basis for undermining affirmative action programs in higher education.

A major purpose of segregation in the schools is to track Black youth into the worst jobs, and to assure their availability as a reserve force of cheap labor for the employers.

In this context, the case of Brian Weber now coming before the Supreme Court takes on major importance. Weber, like Bakke, claims he is a victim of “reverse discrimination” because an on-the-job-training program instituted at the Kaiser steel plant as part of its contract with the United Steelworkers of America, assured a certain number of positions to Blacks and women. The aim of the program was to train more workers, including whites, for better-paying job categories.

The attack on school integration and Black job rights is aimed at every worker. It is part and parcel of the sweeping attacks on wages, working conditions, and public services now being carried on by the ruling class.

That is why many unions are beginning to take strong stands against Brian Weber's racist suit. In its brief against Weber, the United Steelworkers union told the Supreme Court, “In-plant segregation, superimposed upon two centuries of endemic racial discrimination at all levels of society, fosters a perception of present racial injustice which is injurious to employee morale and union solidarity.”

That is also why class-conscious union members need to bring the power of labor into play behind the fight for Black equality, including the fight to resume our march toward desegregated, truly equal educational opportunity.

...Inco

Continued from preceding page

members has brought them through a rough winter to the point where they are confident that with the drop in Inco's nickel stockpiles and the rise in the price of nickel, the union power of Local 6500 can force Inco's bosses to give them the kind of contract they need.

The solidarity within the local has been matched by solidarity from workers across the country. Over the eight months thousands of dollars has poured in to support the strikers.

Sudbury miners see their struggle as a major test of strength between working people and the big corporate giants like Inco. Many miners we talked to agreed that a victory against Inco would be a victory for all workers in much the same way the stand taken by U.S. coal miners in their 110 day strike

last year helped strengthen the position of American workers.

The sentiment in Sudbury is that “If Inco can be beaten—anyone can be beaten.” It accurately reflects the impact the outcome of the strike will have on other major contract struggles coming up. This summer auto and lumber workers are fighting for new contracts. Railworkers are currently deciding what to do about their contract. Quebec government workers are heading into a fight with the Quebec government. And postal workers are fighting to keep their leaders from being railroaded to jail. These struggles will be affected by what happens in Sudbury in the next weeks and months.

Solidarity needed

Today the Sudbury miners stand in the front line of the struggle by working people to beat back attempts by the employers and their governments to raise corporation profits by cutting

back on jobs, wages, benefits, and social services. The Inco fight is everyone's fight. A renewed and more

powerful drive to build moral and financial solidarity with Local 6500 is needed now.

Arthur Felberbaum dies

NEW YORK—Arthur Felberbaum, a longtime socialist, died here of a heart attack May 24. He was forty-four.

Felberbaum was a founding member of the Young Socialist Alliance. He belonged to the YSA and the Socialist Workers Party until the mid-1960s. More recently he was associated with the School for Marxist Education here. He was education director of the school from 1975 through 1978.

When Young Socialist Clubs were established in 1958 as the forerunner of the YSA, he helped to establish a

club in Philadelphia. He was then a student at Temple University.

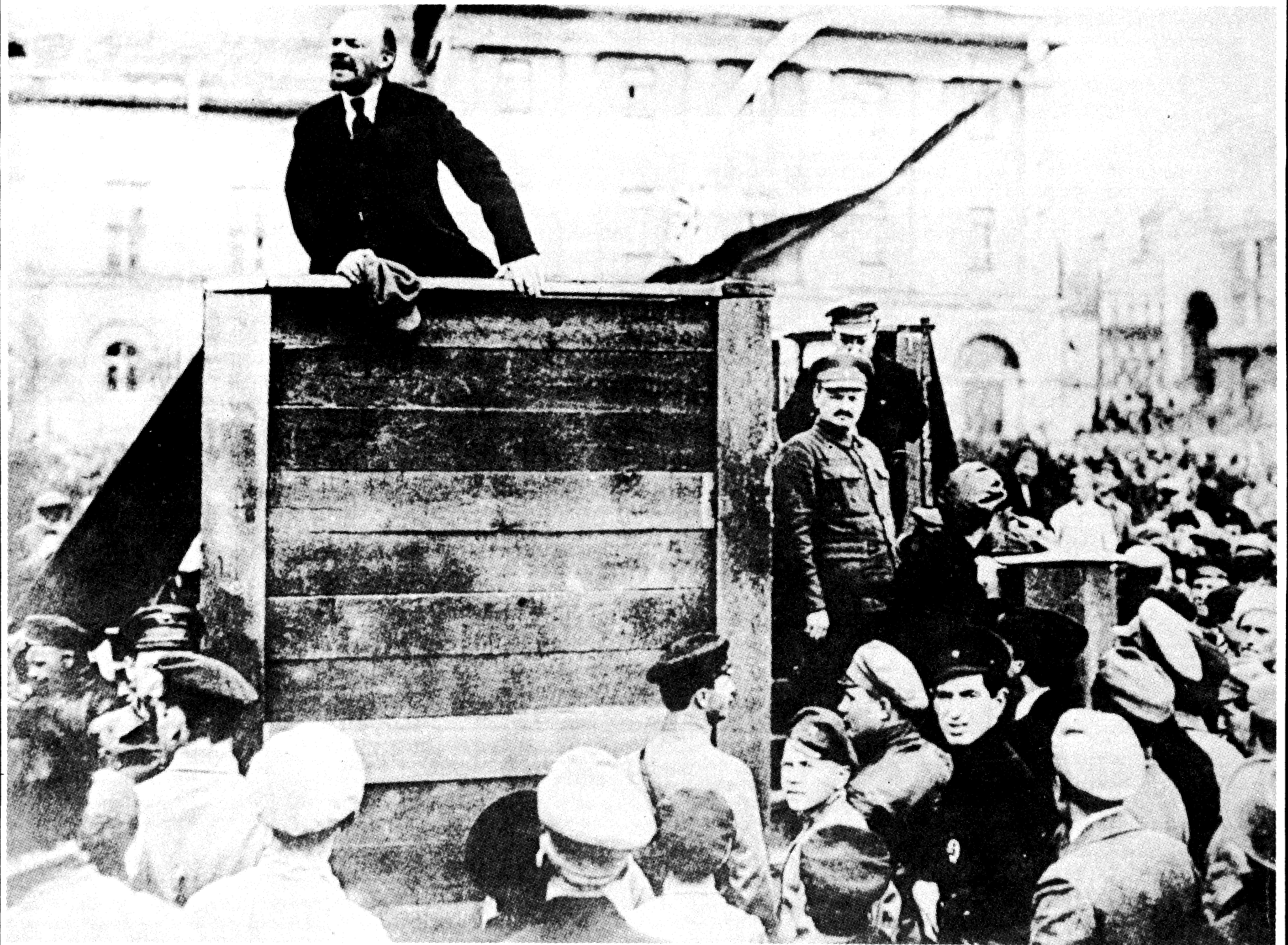
He was a delegate to the founding convention of the YSA in 1960 and served for a period on the editorial board of the YSA's publication, the *Young Socialist*.

In the early 1960s Felberbaum also played an active role in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, which brought the truth about Cuba to the people of this country at the height of the campaign whipped up by the U.S. rulers against the Cuban revolution.

international socialist review

James P. Cannon Internationalist

By Joseph Hansen



The Month in Review

An Alternative to Carter Antilabor Drive

THE MONTH IN REVIEW

A Real Alternative to Carter Antilabor Drive

"The American people are disturbed; the American people are doubtful; the American people are uncertain about the future; the American people do not have automatic trust in you or me or other Democratic officials," Jimmy Carter told a May 25 meeting of the Democratic National Committee.

American working people are all that and more. We're angry that double-digit inflation is slashing our buying power. We are upset at the decline in the quality of our lives.

We're convinced that the government is lying to us about energy shortages and forcing down wages while helping the rich line their pockets.

And working people want something done about it *now*.

To the union officialdom that corralled workers into helping elect Carter in 1976, this mood is a "problem." Quite a few are now making gestures to disassociate themselves from Carter.

A typical example was a May 6 advertisement in the *New York Times* announcing plans to form the "National Committee for a Democratic Alternative."

The most important signers were three union officials: William Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists; James Balanoff, director of United Steelworkers District 31; and Abe Feinglass, international vice-president of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butchers. Other signers were an assortment of liberals often found in the train of union officials like Winpisinger.

The advertisement decried Carter's attacks on working people. But the spur for this indictment was fear that "a great many disheartened Democrats will simply not bother to vote [in 1980], giving the election to the Republicans." To forestall this, they propose working for "a better Democratic presidential candidate or a better Democratic platform."

Instead of Carter—Jerry Brown or Edward Kennedy. Plus a few vote-catching promises that will be consigned to the junk heap as soon as the polls close—just as Carter did with the platform promises that Winpisinger and other union officials touted so highly in 1976.

The search for a "better" Democratic candidate is a logical extension of the signers' view of Carter as "well-meaning" but weak. They say he "blunders on inflation."

But Carter isn't fighting inflation at all. Like Nixon and Ford before him, he is driving forward the employers' attacks on the wages

and living conditions of working people. And that includes using wage guidelines to keep our pay increases well under the inflation rate.

But Carter won't lift a finger to stop price increases. And these are gnawing away at the incomes of workers and farmers like a malignant growth. On May 26 the Consumer Price Index reported an increase of 1.1 percent in April—making for an annual rate of 13.9 percent.

This statistic conceals the savagery of the blow being dealt to the living conditions of working people.

AFL-CIO President George Meany reported, according to the May 1979 *Journal* of the International Molders and Allied Workers, that the price of eggs rose 57 percent in four months in one Cleveland supermarket, while the price of a pair of boys' sneakers jumped 15 percent in Washington, D.C.

Beef prices are running about twice what they were last year. Government statistics claim that gasoline prices rose fifteen cents per gallon in little more than a month—but drivers waiting in the gas line have noticed bigger increases than that.

The prices of the necessities of life (the things we spend our paychecks on) are increasing at a significantly faster rate than the Consumer Price Index reports.

Administration officials proclaim helplessness in face of skyrocketing prices. "I'm like a leaf floating in the macroeconomic ocean," said Alfred Kahn, head of Carter's Council on Wage and Price Stability. Kahn adopts a pose of Buddha-like resignation in the face of big-business price gouging, but he's a regular dynamo when it comes to helping the employers force down wages in contract negotiations.

Carter doesn't regard his bogus "anti-inflation" program as a "blunder." In fact, he doesn't think we've taken enough punishment yet. "We are going to have less oil," he stated May 25. "We are going to have to pay more for it." Carter's "we" means us, not the capitalist politicians and big-business profiteers.

There is no blunder. As a capitalist politician, Carter is helping the wealthy capitalist minority try to overcome the crisis of their system at the expense of workers and farmers.

Kennedy or Brown, should one of them succeed Carter in the White House, would pursue the same program.

What answer do Winpisinger, Balanoff, and Feinglass offer to the scourge of inflation? They propose "mandatory wage-price controls instead of [Carter's] ineffectual voluntary guidelines." This is not only wrong, but treacherous.

Whether guidelines or controls are used, the target of the capitalist government's phony "anti-inflation" policy is workers' wages, not capitalists' prices. This was the case when a freeze was instituted under Nixon in 1971 as well as under Carter's guidelines.

Wage controls are a possible line of defense for the employers if the guidelines are shattered by union resistance, but they will be of no help to workers.

In putting forward this antilabor proposal, Winpisinger, Balanoff, and Feinglass tailor their anti-inflation program to what Democratic presidential contenders are willing to accept.

But what workers need and capitalist politicians want are different things. Workers need the power of their unions mobilized to defend and restore their living standards. The Democratic Party contains and stifles that power in the interests of the rich.

We need union power to win catch-up wage increases to make up for the harm done by inflation. We need escalator clauses in all contracts, social security and other pension payments, and veterans benefits. We need a shorter workweek with no cut in pay so that all can make a living.

The government fronts for the oil and food trusts, and for all the other corporate price-fixers. Carter berates us as selfish and unpatriotic for not believing the unsupported assertions of the oil giants about shortages.

But union power can demand that the books of the monopolies be opened so that working people can see their bloated profits and hoarded goods, and can expose their price-fixing deals.

But no Democratic or Republican candidates will support the unions in fighting for these necessary measures.

Instead of worrying about whether workers will vote Democratic in 1980, Winpisinger, Balanoff, and Feinglass should back something worth voting for. Instead of wasting valuable time and union resources on running candidates "for Delegate to the Democratic National Convention," as the advertisement suggests, their unions could set an example for the whole labor movement by fielding their own independent candidates for local, state, and federal office.

They can launch an effective fight for the unions to unite around an independent labor ticket in the 1980 presidential election.

Labor candidates can give voice to the anger and demands not only of union members, but of working farmers, the unemployed, the Black community, and all the victims of the capitalist inflationary ripoff.

The mood of workers today guarantees a favorable response to any decisive moves Winpisinger, Balanoff, or others make in this direction. Such initial steps would lay a firm basis for the creation of a labor party, shattering the capitalist two-party monopoly.

Backing independent labor candidates won't win union officials any praise from the employers, the media they control, or the capitalist politicians. But it's a lot more realistic than the eternal search for new promises and new faces from a party owned lock, stock, and barrel by the enemies of working people.

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James P. Cannon Internationalist

By Joseph Hansen

The following was given as an educational talk in August 1975 in conjunction with the national convention of the Socialist Workers Party in Oberlin, Ohio.

Hansen, the editor of 'Intercontinental Press' and a leader of the SWP for more than four decades, was one of the outstanding figures of the world Trotskyist movement. He played a key role in the reunifying of the forces of the Fourth International in 1963, ending a ten-year factional split. Hansen died on January 18, 1979.

Hansen discusses the internationalist outlook of James P. Cannon (1890-1974), the founding leader of the American Trotskyist movement.

Hansen's speech has been edited for publication in the 'International Socialist Review.'

September 13, 1938

Dear Comrade Rose [Karsner]:¹

It seems that Jim is doing an excellent job in Europe. The news concerning the Greek section is very agreeable. I regret very much that we don't have a couple of Jims more. At least one for Europe.

Joe [Hansen] wrote you about the situation here. We are waiting for Otto [Schuessler] and the Austrian and this waiting makes uncertain all our plans and combinations. Only you in New York with the help of Jim if he is still in Europe could clarify the situation and thus create a base for concrete decisions.

My best greetings.

Yours,
L. Trotsky

Writings of Leon Trotsky 1937-38 (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1976) p. 448.

* * *

In considering James P. Cannon as an internationalist, it may prove useful to begin by eliminating some possible misunderstandings.

It is generally thought that by "internationalist" we mean someone who is interested in foreign causes. A good example in the recent past would be a person who sympathized with the Vietnamese and wanted them to win, or at least wanted them to be free to decide their own fate.

A current case is Angola where the country

appears on the verge of civil war and where Portuguese imperialism is intervening in hope of eventually imposing a neocolonialist government.

The truth is many people can become keenly interested in developments in other countries, such as a famine, civil strife, a war, or commotion of some kind or another.

Their interest is good. It can become the first step in what might develop into true internationalism.

The big hurdle is *practice*. What do you propose to do about the issues that have aroused your interest, your sympathy or your anger?

Some people may think of turning to the United Nations. They think of the obligation of that body to do something. Others think of the U.S. government. They might even send a letter to their favorite congresswoman.

Such courses have at least one glaring defect. Dependence is placed on others doing something. It is a neat way to avoid becoming personally committed.

That kind of internationalism is quite different from the kind represented by Cannon. Internationalism as he saw it goes much beyond goodwill and good intentions. It must be placed within the framework of socialism.

Misunderstandings of Internationalism

But even this is not sufficient. Still other misunderstandings are possible. In a revolutionary socialist grouping itself a wrong view can be taken of internationalism.

For instance, an internationalist is not necessarily a specialist in the sociology, economics, and politics of other countries. Thus, an American socialist who becomes an expert in Japanese affairs does not thereby automatically become an internationalist. An American socialist who devotes time and energy to the study of Japan may be able to write instructive articles on the subject. And such contributions may well be appreciated not only in the United States but in other countries, including Japan itself.

Since I am talking to an audience that is primarily American, the example may become more vivid if it is turned around. A Japanese socialist who concentrates on the American scene does not thereby automatically become an internationalist no matter how thorough his or her studies may be, or how much those studies may be appreciated even by Americans.

If it were possible to become an internationalist simply by choosing some foreign country, drawing up a reading list of material on it, and retiring to a library until the material is mastered, it would greatly simplify matters. Still

better, a person could obviously become more and more internationalist over the years by repeating this procedure over and over again. The more countries you become expert in, the greater you are as an internationalist. This could be called the quantitative theory of internationalism.

Jim Cannon held rather decided opinions on this. He felt that it was a revolutionist's first duty to master the affairs of one's own country. Over the years he had seen too many instances of individuals, especially those with intellectual pretensions, who had shirked their first duty, covering up their dereliction by becoming pseudo-experts on the affairs of other countries. A young comrade who failed to become absorbed in the problems of the American revolution and who turned instead to the problems of revolutions in other countries always remained somewhat suspect in Jim's eyes.

Lest a new misunderstanding arise at this point, let me stress that Jim placed high value on accurate knowledge of developments in other countries, particularly revolutionary developments. He was keenly alert to anything that might affect the world revolution, which in his view always had a decisive bearing on the course of American revolutionists, ranging from the task of explaining the meaning of the developments to organizing solidarity actions and seeking to take advantage of openings that might appear in the United States because of events abroad.

Within this framework Cannon appreciated the analyses and conclusions of American revolutionists who became genuine experts in the affairs of other countries. It goes without saying that he paid still closer attention to the analyses and conclusions of revolutionists native to countries where the class struggle became especially sharp and had worldwide repercussions.

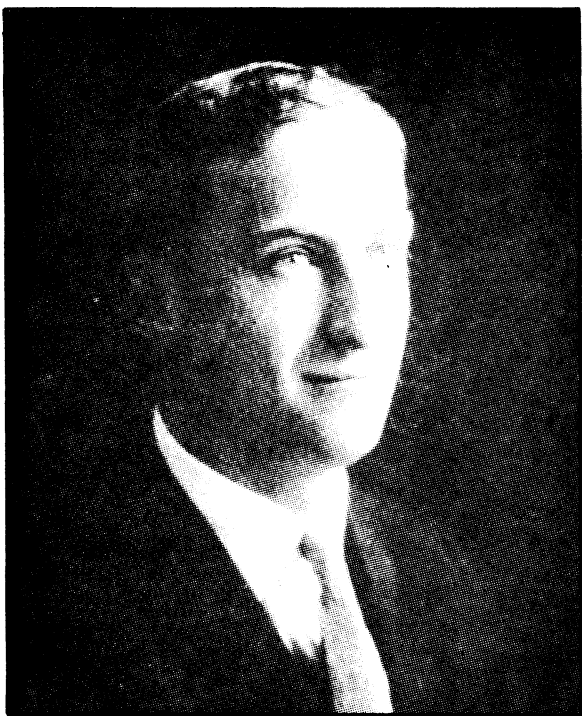
Let me turn to another possible misunderstanding.

An internationalist is not necessarily distinguished by a capacity to work out revolutionary programs, particularly on the tactical level, for the revolutionists of other countries.

For example, an American might attempt to sit down and write a forty-eight-point program for a group of revolutionists in Indonesia. If Jim Cannon were alive, he would do his utmost to squelch such presumption on the grounds that it did not evidence an internationalist attitude but just the contrary.

If the situation were reversed and we in the Socialist Workers Party received a communication from a group in some other country proposing adoption of a program they had worked out for application in the United States, we would

1. Rose Karsner (1890-1968) was a founder of the American Communist Party, the Communist League of America (the Trotskyist Left Opposition), and the Socialist Workers Party. She was Cannon's close political collaborator and companion from 1924.



Jay Lovestone and William Z. Foster, leaders of factions in the Communist Party. Stalin played the factions against each other to establish his control and purge independent-minded forces.

examine it with interest. Our interest would center primarily on seeing how much they really knew about the situation in the United States and about the concrete problems facing our party. We would also probably think that the group that had sent the proposed program had not yet achieved a truly internationalist outlook.

Again, to avoid any new misunderstanding, these imaginary cases do not involve the question of comradely collaboration in working out programs. And they do not involve the question of comradely criticism in instances where programs or courses of action have been proved by events to have been wrong.

In considering James P. Cannon as an internationalist, it is important to remove these possible misunderstandings. If you do not dispose of them, you might be taken in by some of his detractors, who long ago reached the conclusion that Cannon was an "American provincial." They mean by that he was a good militant, but one who never achieved international stature, since he did not become a specialist in the affairs of a single country outside of the United States and never tried to dictate programs to revolutionists in other countries.

From Rosedale to a World View

To understand Cannon's development as an internationalist and to appreciate the level he finally reached, it is necessary to go back to the beginning of his career as a revolutionary socialist.

He learned about socialism from his father and from reading such literature as the *Appeal to Reason*. He began distributing the *Appeal to Reason* in 1906 at the age of sixteen. He joined the Socialist Party in 1908; but did not commit himself to the movement until 1911 at the age of twenty-one.

As a youth in the small midwestern town of Rosedale, Kansas, he could accurately be described as an "American provincial" although he was unusual in his range of intellectual interests.

What changed him from being an "American provincial" to something different? He was changed by the international outlook that socialism opened up for him. The flat prairie horizon, which had seemed wide enough when he was a boy, gave way to a view that circled the globe. Jim's rebellion against the limitations, the restrictions, and the injustices to be seen in America found a goal in the vision of a new society built on the cooperation of human beings of all lands and races and on the mobilization of all of humanity's creative forces on a world scale.

Consider for a moment what had happened in this individual instance. A young man reared in one of the most backward regions of the United States had gained an understanding of the basic tenets of the most advanced theory of society and its course of development—the most developed that science had to offer. The result was an unusual combination.

Jim himself regarded it as quite novel. Here was a Rosedale kid who really fit in with the pool-hall gang, yet he had come to understand how the society around him was bound together by an international economic system that was absolutely certain to give way to a socialist order. Most important of all, he himself could play a role in helping the process along. That was the

practical side. This was where theory was converted into practice.

A pool-hall tough with an internationalist socialist outlook. To his last days, Jim thought of this combination as something of a miracle, although it was not really that strange. In fact, others not much different from him were also going through this process. And Jim was absolutely convinced that millions of young Americans would eventually go through a similar experience.

What is important in evaluating Jim from this angle is that while he never forgot his origin as an "American provincial," what dominated his conscious life from then on was the international outlook that had come to him as a great illuminating vision.

As I mentioned, Jim committed himself to the socialist cause in 1911, when he joined the Industrial Workers of the World. He decided to dedicate himself to doing everything in his power to advance the cause of the international socialist revolution in the United States. That was how you converted theory into practice; and that was why he joined the Industrial Workers of the World. The IWW devoted itself to acting in the class struggle, not just theorizing about it. Socialism would be won by advancing the class struggle, not by dropping pieces of paper in a ballot box. What they nowadays call, in some countries, the electoral farce.

The IWW proved to be an invaluable school. Thrown into strikes and other battles, Jim soon learned the role that good leadership plays in assuring victories or in cushioning defeats. His natural talents in this respect soon brought him to the attention of some of the top leaders of the IWW, particularly Vincent St. John, and they taught him everything they could.

Thus, in a relatively short time, Jim became a battle-hardened veteran in the American class struggle, a practitioner of socialism in this preparatory stage, an expert in tactics and strategy. He was a representative of the continuity of leadership in this very rough and at times quite violent field. Jim counted his continuity going right back to Albert Parsons, a great American revolutionary leader and one of the Haymarket martyrs, who were hanged in 1887 because of their militant role as labor organizers.

Jim, it should be stressed, considered the battles he became involved in as simply part of the necessary preparation for the coming American revolution, which, in turn, was but part of the world revolution that would topple capitalism and make it possible to build socialism on an international scale.

Internationalism in World War I

Unfortunately, it proved impossible to win with this straightforward course, no matter how natural it appeared to be on the surface.

In 1914, for the first time in history, a world war broke out. Still worse, the international socialist movement, which had even anticipated the event and warned that it would be met with revolution, fell to pieces. The socialist parties on the two sides came out for defense of the fatherland, that is, in support of their own capitalist classes. For many socialists everything seemed lost. Even if socialist theory remained valid, it had broken down in practice.

In the United States, the right-wing leaders of the Socialist Party took the side of the Allies. When Woodrow Wilson, who had been reelected president on the slogan, "He kept us out of war," decided to join the bloody but profitable conflict and sent the doughboys to die on foreign battlefields, the right-wing socialists climbed onto the bandwagon, where they made spectacles of themselves selling war bonds.

The left wing of the Socialist Party, to which Jim naturally belonged, was incapable of working out an effective line of opposition to the war. The best it could come up with was resistance to the draft. It was left up to the young men in the Socialist Party to declare themselves as conscientious objectors on an individual basis.

This line did not arouse Jim's enthusiasm. In fact, he found it distasteful. Nevertheless, because nothing better was proposed, he became a conscientious objector. Later he was to describe what a political blunder this course represented from the socialist point of view. Among other things, the party should have sought to place its members inside the armed forces where, day in and day out, they could have explained their opposition to the war to an audience that was bound to become more and more receptive to the message.

Jim's judgment in this is quite correct. Nonetheless it is worth noting that in applying this line, Jim's intent was clearly internationalist. Conscientious objection, while ineffective, represented opposition to imperialist war—opposition, moreover, to his own ruling class and its government during the war itself.

Russian Revolution Intervenes

Before 1917, like other militants in the left wing of the Socialist Party who were becoming known for their leadership capacities, Jim puzzled over what had happened to the socialist movement because of the war. Without really being aware of it, he was moving toward the question of the politics of the socialist movement.

The Russian revolution, culminating in the triumph of the Bolsheviks in November 1917, altered the entire situation. The debacle in the international socialist movement caused by the betrayals of the parties belonging to the Second International appeared to have been overcome at one stroke. The world revolution had scored a decisive advance. For the first time since the Paris Commune in 1871, revolutionary socialists had won governmental power. They had proved in practice the validity of socialist theory.

Today, almost sixty years after that great event, it is difficult to visualize the enthusiasm it created among the masses on a world scale including inside the United States. Here it opened up a completely new perspective. Figures like Cannon responded as if they had been given a new lease on life. They set themselves two main tasks. First, to support the Bolsheviks with every means at their command. Second, to learn how the Bolsheviks achieved their victory so as to be able to apply those lessons to the United States.

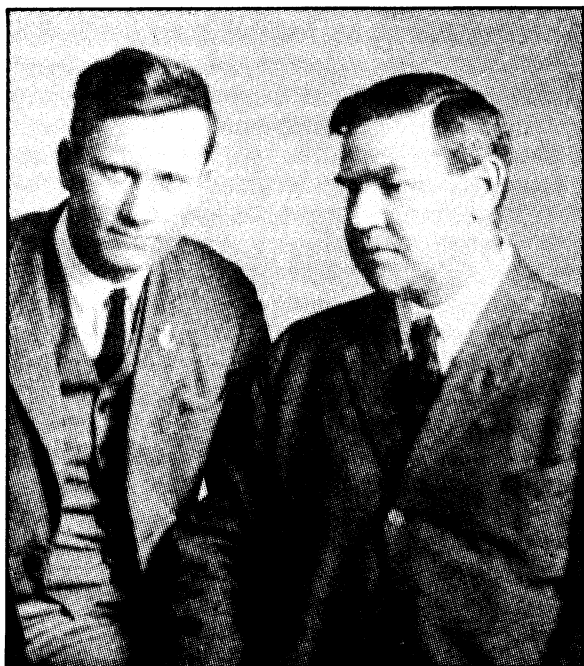
This work proceeded along factional lines inside the Socialist Party. The adherents of the Bolsheviks set out to organize a movement capable of applying the methods of the Russians in the United States. They did this even while they studied everything they could obtain elucidating those methods. This material was not abundant because of the language problem and the conditions of the times. Consequently gaps in knowledge, ill-digested concepts, and outright misunderstandings were rather widespread.

Nevertheless, in responding to the formation of the Communist International in 1919, the left wing split from the Socialist Party and set out to apply in the United States what they thought they had learned from the experience of the Russian revolution. The split was a ragged one, ending in the formation of public factions that designated themselves as parties.

Matters were made more complicated by a witch-hunt that was, if anything, more ferocious than the one that took place in the 1950s under Senator McCarthy, and the fledgling American Communists of those days had little choice but to go underground.

Birth of American Bolshevism

In the spring of 1920, when two of the factions joined together to form the United Communist Party, Cannon was elected to the Central Committee and assigned to the St. Louis-Southern Illinois district of the party. A few months later



William D. Haywood (right) and Cannon in Moscow in 1922. They were among the militants of the Industrial Workers of the World who supported the formation of the Communist International.

he was sent to Cleveland to edit the *Toiler*, and a couple of months after that he was called to New York to serve as a resident member of the Central Committee. From then on he was in the central leadership.

The recognition of Cannon as a leader of national stature did not come as a result of any contributions on the theoretical or philosophical level. It came because of his intimate knowledge of the labor movement and his ability as an organizer. A top-rate politician of that kind was precisely what the center needed.

The main lesson that Cannon had drawn from the Russian revolution was the need for a party of the kind Lenin had built. In the immense task of carrying forward the American revolution, Cannon had reached the conclusion that the key to success lay in constructing a party on the Leninist model. He contrasted that, of course, in his mind with the experience under the Wobblies, who had no such party, and with the experience in the Socialist Party, which was not a Leninist party.

You could say that a new level had been reached in the extraordinary combination of qualities now to be found in James P. Cannon. In him was embodied the very best in the American socialist tradition, not merely in the form of knowledge gained from reading but in the form of living experience in the class struggle itself. This rich experience and consciousness of its continuity with the past struggles of the working class in America had now become fused with Bolshevism, the very latest development in international Marxism.

It is true that at this stage Jim's Bolshevism was still rough hewn. But he knew that Bolshevism represented a qualitative advance in carrying out the task of proceeding from the theory of socialism to its successful application in a revolution. He had dedicated his life to precisely that objective, and so he set out to become adept in Bolshevism. Jim's approach was that of a true internationalist. He wanted to put the ideas of the Bolsheviks into practice, right at home, in his own land, where he was born and raised. It was because of what it could mean in practice that he became a student of the Russians; that is of the Russians of 1917.

Jim could be described at that point as a revolutionist of action, a prototype of those whom Trotsky expected to come more and more to the fore as the fulfillers of what Marx and Engels had forecast in theory.

As one of the founding leaders of the Communist Party, Jim acted as he had previously and as he was to act to the last day of his life. He tried to size up the situation faced by the party and to work out solutions or possible solutions to the problems that had to be met if the party were to move forward. And, of course, to move forward meant moving within the framework of the basic principles of revolutionary Marxism.

The Early Factionalism

The next three years—from 1920 to 1923—were very important in Cannon's development as an internationalist.

The American Communist Party consisted of various factions, tendencies, and cliques, each with its own prescriptions as to what to do in relation to the issues of the day. As a whole their

proposed lines were ultraleftist, sectarian, doctrinaire, and dogmatic. The majority of the membership consisted of foreign-born workers, who tended to follow events through publications in their own language, and who considered themselves to stand at a higher cultural level than American-born workers, an estimate that was generally true.

How were such disparate groupings to be developed into a politically homogeneous party and brought into effective connection with the American class struggle? Cannon saw the problem clearer than anyone, and he worked away at trying to solve it.

One of the big difficulties was that an authoritative central leadership had not yet been established. The party remained divided in warring factions, a reflection of the fact that a politically homogeneous leadership team had not yet emerged. The leaders of the factions were engaged in a struggle to assert themselves and to establish their authority.

The task was to bring out the political issues and to subject the various lines of the factions to the test of events. This, of course, had to be done in relation to the concrete situation inside the United States.

Cannon participated vigorously in this struggle for leadership and in the process gained additional skill as a faction fighter. In fact, throughout the party his generalship in these battles was considered to be of the highest caliber.

This rough-and-tumble training in leadership, though one-sided, was very important. Still more important, however, was the attitude displayed by the leadership of the Communist International under Lenin and Trotsky.

First of all, the Communist International in those days had no ulterior motives. Lenin and Trotsky did not favor this or that grouping because of the needs, or supposed needs, of the Kremlin's foreign policy, or to strengthen a faction inside Russia.

Second, when appeals were made to their judgment, they listened carefully to both sides or if there were three sides, they listened to all three. They operated fairly and loyally. Their reputation was such that all sides in a dispute counted on them to act with complete honesty. They took time in their deliberations, refusing to move hastily. They were objective. They did not try to settle old scores or defend previous errors.

Third, they tended to let the fight continue its natural course, viewing it as a normal process through which a young party develops a leadership capable of standing on its own feet. When they thought the time had come to express an opinion, they relied on careful explanation.

Fourth, they were completely open to argument and were ready to change their opinions if they felt that the arguments were persuasive.

Fifth, they relied heavily on advice and refrained from organizational crackdowns.

The result was that the Communist International played a highly positive role in helping the young party to find its way through the difficulties that beset it. The Comintern genuinely sought to do everything in its power to place its knowledge and experience at the disposal of the leadership of the American party as a whole, so as to help it to the maximum in developing a competent revolutionary leadership.

The attitude of the Communist International thus provided Cannon with a model of how an international center should operate. The model was not a facsimile but the original, so to speak. The Comintern had immense authority. Behind it stood the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. Moreover, the Comintern had huge resources, being backed by a state power. Yet there was no cracking of the whip. The Comintern proceeded reasonably, with a comradely attitude, seeking collaboration, and functioning in a collaborative way. And there could be no doubt that that was the way Lenin and Trotsky wanted it. They insisted on the Comintern using its authority judiciously and in strict relationship to the realities facing the national sections. That was the quickest, easiest, and soundest way to build an international of revolutionary parties, led by national leaderships that could do the job.

As was only natural, this model sank into Jim's mind. In the position of a leader of a national section, he directly experienced how leaders of the caliber of Lenin and Trotsky proceeded in trying to help construct a national leadership capable of leading a revolution.

It should be noted that Jim's primary orientation remained that of taking what he learned from the Bolsheviks and applying it to the American scene; that is, specifically, putting into practice the Bolshevik method of building a party of revolutionary cadres.

Changing Role of the Comintern

The next period, from 1924 to 1928, constituted a completely unexpected chapter in Jim's development as a party leader and internationalist.

The objective difficulties facing the party in the United States became intense in face of a big boom in the economy and a resulting sag in the class struggle. In this situation, what was required was consolidation of the party leadership and preparation of the ranks for the economic depression that would inevitably end the boom. That would put the party in the best possible position to advance with giant strides.

However, all kinds of new obstacles kept blocking a favorable outcome to the struggle of contending factions in the party. In fact the struggle worsened and began taking ugly and dangerous forms. The role of the Comintern became increasingly suspect. For instance, the faction headed by Cannon and Foster succeeded in gaining a majority at the Fourth Convention of the party in 1925 only to see the Comintern intervene, cancel it out, and put a minority in charge of the party.

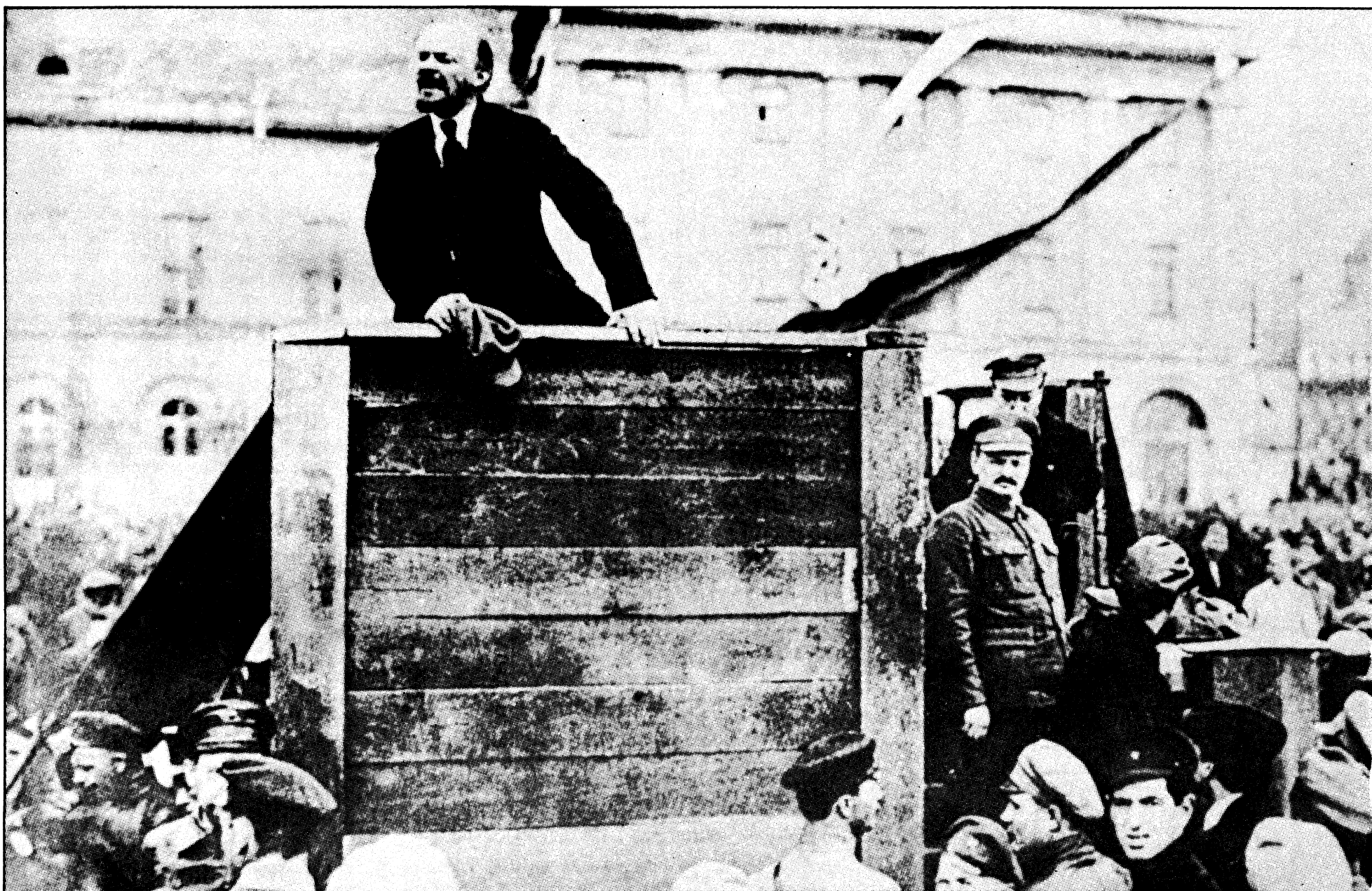
Lenin had died in 1924. The faction struggle that he had initiated against Stalin and the bureaucratism that Stalin represented was carried on by Trotsky. But that origin of the struggle was not known abroad. The issues themselves were ill understood by the American Communist Party leaders, particularly in view of the fact that the documents of the Left Opposition organized by Trotsky were not made available. The Stalinist faction drove savagely to crush the opposition, and it used the Comintern to advance that objective on an international scale.

The Left Opposition mounted a heroic political struggle against the mounting reaction forming around Stalin. The political stands they took proved to be correct in every instance. But the full import of the struggle was not grasped at that time even by Trotsky. Trotsky did not reach a rounded assessment of the development of Stalinism until after the debacle in Germany in 1933, when Hitler took power without the German Communist Party putting up any serious struggle at all.

Trotsky presented his final, rounded theoretical conclusions in an article dated February 1, 1935, entitled "The Workers State, Thermidor and Bonapartism," which is an article I highly recommend, and in his book *The Revolution Betrayed*, which he completed in August 1936 and which was published in 1937.



James P. Cannon, Martin Abern, and Max Shachtman. Their stand against Stalinism in 1928 led to expulsion from the Communist Party. They formed the Communist League of America, predecessor of the SWP.



Lenin speaks to Soviet workers in 1919. The Russian revolution spurred the formation of the Communist International. Trotsky, in Red Army uniform at right, stands platform.

The American Communist cadres, like most of those outside of the Soviet Union, were unable to see the international significance of the struggle. From afar, in the absence of adequate information, it looked like an obscure factional struggle over domestic issues in the Soviet Union. Perhaps at bottom it was only a power struggle inside the Russian party.

Thus the perspective appeared obscure and disheartening, and—while things were not as bad as in the period from 1914 to 1917 during the world war—the world revolution, including its American sector, was not moving ahead. In fact, it seemed to be falling back. Something was decidedly wrong in practice.

Defending Leninism Against Stalinism

For Cannon, this period ended in the summer of 1928 when as a delegate to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International he accidentally received a copy of an important document written by Trotsky, then in exile in Alma Ata. The document was *The Draft Program of the Communist International: A Criticism of Fundamentals*.

This document clarified the issues for Cannon. He became completely convinced of the correctness of Trotsky's views. The conviction was all the more impelling because of the insights it offered into what had been happening in the American section during the previous four years.

Cannon himself explained his reactions many times. In view of the fact that his motives are still being questioned in some quarters, I think he is entitled to take the floor. Listen to his words in the introduction to *The First Ten Years of American Communism*:

"The degeneration of the Communist Party did not swallow up everybody in its ranks. A small minority revolted against Stalinism without capitulating to American imperialism. There were reasons for that too.

"Those gossips who explain the degeneration of the majority as the natural result of their personal traits and delinquencies, or as the logical outcome of immoral communism, are puzzled by this apparent deviation from the rule. They are at a loss to explain why a few of the original communists became neither Stalinist flunkies nor government informers, but remained what they had been and continued the struggle for the revolutionary program under the leadership of Trotsky and the Russian Opposition.

"The moralistic judges have been especially puzzled by the circumstance that I was among them; was, in fact, the initiator; and—still more inexplicably—have held consistently to that position in 25 years of struggle. These noble commentators on the doings and motivations of others never fail to point out that I was mixed up in all the factional alley-fights of the party, without any pretensions to non-partisan holiness, then or afterward, and that I have neglected to offer any apologies or make any confessions—and on this point they do not lie. How then, they ask, could such a person 'come out for Trotsky' after he was completely defeated, expelled, and isolated in exile in far away Alma Ata?

"That question has really intrigued the kibitzers, and there has been no lack of speculation as to the causes for my action. In my reading of the political trapezoids, which is part of my routine, I have seen my revolt against the Stalinized Comintern in 1928 variously described as a 'mistake,' an 'accident' and a 'mystery'—the mistake, accident or mystery being why a communist faction fighter of the Twenties who, like all the others, fought to win, should deliberately align himself with a 'lost cause'—and stick to it.

"There was no mystery about it, and it was neither an accident nor a mistake. In the first chapters of my *History of American Trotskyism*, I have already told the truth about the circumstances surrounding my action in 1928 and the reasons for it. These reasons seemed to me to be correct and logical at the time as the simple duty of a communist—which I was, an am—and 25 years of reflection, combined with unceasing struggle to implement my decision, have not changed my opinion.

"When I read Trotsky's 'Criticism of the Draft Program' at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928, I was convinced at once—and for good—that the theory of 'Socialism in One Country' was basically anti-revolutionary and that Trotsky and the Russian Opposition represented the true program of the revolution—the original Marxist program. What else could I do but support them? And what difference did it make that they were a small minority, defeated, expelled and exiled? It was a question of principle. This may be Greek to the philistine, but it is not an 'accident' for a communist to act on principle, once it becomes clear to him. It is a matter of course.

"My decision to support Trotsky and the Left Opposition in 1928, and to break with all the factions in the Communist Party over that issue, was not a sudden 'conversion' on my part; and neither was my earlier decision in 1917 to support the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks and to leave the IWW behind.

"Each time I remained what I had started out to be in my youth—a revolutionist against capitalism. The Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks in the first instance, and the heroic struggle of the Left Opposition in the second, taught me some things I hadn't known before and hadn't been able to figure out for myself. They made me a better and more effective fighter for my own cause. But they did not basically change me into something I hadn't been before. They did not 'convert' me to the revolution; I was a revolutionist to start with."

By way of further explanation, it should be pointed out that Jim understood to perfection what the immediate practical consequences of his espousal of the program of the Left Opposition would be. It meant expulsion from the party forthwith. It meant breaking relations with comrades with whom he had marched since 1919 and even before. It meant isolation. It meant being placed in the status of a pariah against whom everyone's blows were directed. It meant that years of practical party-building work went down the drain.

Jim consciously accepted all that because it was a matter of principle. He had to remain true to the cause to which he had dedicated his life in 1911.

In Cannon's development as an internationalist, the commitment to the Left Opposition in 1928 represented a qualitative step forward.

Role of the American Revolution

He had become a leader of international importance in the struggle to cleanse the Comintern of the Stalinist filth and to restore the exemplary procedures of its first years under Lenin and Trotsky.

At the same time, he did not lose sight of the need to create a strong American base for the International Left Opposition. In this demanding task, he had full need for everything he had learned in the class struggle and in the factional battles in the left wing of the Socialist Party and in the formative stage of the Communist Party.

He needed above all, a correct concept of the



speakers October 26, 1959: Cubans protest U.S. attacks on their revolution in Havana. The Cuban revolution provided new inspiration to revolutionists, speeding the reunification of the Fourth International.

role the American revolution is destined to play in ending the era of capitalism and opening the new era of a worldwide socialist society.

Trotsky's views on this are well-known. In his autobiography, he states that ever since his brief stay in New York in 1917, "the problem of 'America versus Europe' has been one of my chief interests. And even now [i.e., in 1929], I am studying the question with the utmost care, hoping to devote a separate book to it. If one is to understand the future destiny of humanity, this is the most important of all subjects." [Leon Trotsky, *My Life* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 270.]

In noting his departure from the United States on March 27, 1917, Trotsky adds the following to his autobiography: "The Russian revolution came so soon that I only managed to catch the general life-rhythm of the monster known as New York. I was leaving for Europe, with the feeling of a man who had had only a peep into the foundry in which the fate of man is to be forged." [Ibid., p. 278.]

Following his exile from the Soviet Union in 1929, Trotsky reaffirmed this view in his first letter to the American Communists who had rallied to the Left Opposition.

Cannon referred many times to that letter. A good example can be found in his concluding speech to the May 31, 1953, meeting of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. Here is what Cannon said:

"The most important party in the entire world is the Socialist Workers Party. It is the party with the greatest historical mission ever given to a group of people on this planet. Trotsky wrote in 1929, in his first letter to the founding group of our movement, that in the final analysis all the problems of this epoch will be solved on American soil; that, although in order of precedence it seemed that the revolution would come sooner in other countries than in the United States, a change in the historical order was easily possible which might put America in the first rank; and that in any case, a social crisis could arise in this country much sooner than anyone assumed, and from the beginning have a very feverish development. And Trotsky said that the conclusion from this perspective is that *it is necessary to prepare*. From that point of view, he said, our founding conference [May 1929], which he was addressing, had a world historic importance." [James P. Cannon, *Speeches to the Party* (Pathfinder,

1973), p. 166. Emphasis in original.]

Cannon's insistence on this point has too often been misconstrued. It has been interpreted by some of his opponents and detractors as confirming that he was at bottom an "American provincial." Some have even interpreted it as a variety of chauvinism; that is, that Cannon was making an invidious comparison between the Socialist Workers Party and other sectors of the world Trotskyist movement. According to this interpretation, Cannon was expressing an arrogant attitude reflecting the pressure of American imperialism.

Such an interpretation is a gross error that only brings discredit on those who advance it. Cannon's point was completely internationalist. He was simply saying that the Russians had the honor of achieving the first big victory in the world revolution; but the honor of achieving the final victory in the world revolution will belong to the Americans. Nothing is settled in the world revolution until that final battle is won. From that elementary proposition, Cannon insisted on the decisive importance of the work of the Socialist Workers Party. Cannon stressed the responsibility that falls on the cadres of the American Trotskyist movement. But it also follows from this view that the healthy development of American Trotskyism is of prime importance to the international Trotskyist movement as a whole.

Others can quarrel with this view, but it should be understood that the quarrel ultimately is with Trotsky.

Cannon and Trotsky

The next eleven years, from 1929 to 1940, marked a fruitful period in the development of Cannon as an internationalist. For he now worked as a close collaborator with Trotsky in conducting the international struggle against Stalinism and in recruiting cadres in all parts of the world. I do not want to give the impression that Trotsky and Cannon represented a duumvirate, that is, a ruling coalition of two persons, for that was not at all the case. Leaders in various countries participated in this work on an equal footing, and Cannon was one of them.

The objective was to form a cohesive team of collaborators on an international scale, a team characterized by both its independence of thought and its capacity to pull together. Nonetheless, the brunt of much of the work fell to the Americans. That was because in those days,

weak as the American contingent was, it was stronger than the other contingents.

A concrete example will indicate what I am referring to.

The main responsibility was given to the Americans to assemble the Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials; that is, the commission headed by John Dewey. The Dewey Commission went to Mexico, where Trotsky was then in exile, cross-examined him, asked for and received from him a great number of documents from his archives, and thoroughly examined the claims made by the prosecution in the trials that were staged in Moscow.

The commission was constituted on an international basis, and the Trotskyists in various countries, particularly France, helped facilitate its work. But the chief figure in the commission was John Dewey, an American educator and philosopher. And the main person on the organizational side was George Novack, an American who had graduated from the philosophical school taught by Dewey and had become a dialectical materialist and Trotskyist.

The commission found Trotsky not guilty, which made headlines in all the international papers. That verdict meant the end of Stalin's moral authority among the thinking public in the entire world. It constituted the most serious blow dealt to Stalinism prior to the Khrushchev revelations and the Hungarian revolution.

The outstanding achievement of that decade of close collaboration with Trotsky was, of course, the formation of the Fourth International in 1938. Here again Cannon played a key role in the preparatory work, particularly in organizing the struggle against those who disagreed with forming a Fourth International or who wanted to postpone it until some distant time in the future. Issac Deutscher [the historian and biographer of Trotsky] was one of those in that category.

I was in Coyoacán during the discussions preceding the founding congress, and I recall Trotsky's asking Cannon to go to England in order to convince the comrades there to join together in a single organization that would select the British delegates to the founding congress. Trotsky was somewhat hesitant to ask Cannon to do this because of Cannon's age—he was forty-eight; and Trotsky thought that this running around should be done by a young

person like Shachtman,² who was in his thirties. However, Trotsky was not sure that Shachtman would be as convincing as Cannon.

Cannon agreed to take the assignment and spent two weeks in England in the summer of 1938 before going on to France, where the founding congress was held. As the result of the work of an international delegation that he headed, three of the four groups he met with held a conference and established a unified section of the International, which was recognized by the founding congress.

For security reasons much of the work of the founding congress had to be done or prepared by special commissions that met in the weeks prior to the one-day congress. Cannon played a leading role in several of these commissions, including those that dealt with the internal problems of the French, Greek, and Mexican sections and the task of organizing defense and relief for revolutionists suffering persecution by the imperialists and the Stalinists. At the end of the congress he was elected to a fifteen-member International Executive Committee, and a week or two later, when reports about the congress began to reach Mexico, Trotsky wrote to Cannon's comrade and companion Rose Karsner, "I regret very much that we don't have a couple of Jims more. At least one for Europe."

The Post-War Split

With the assassination of Trotsky in August of 1940, the newly founded Fourth International was considered by many observers to be doomed. Among those holding this view was certainly the murderer in the Kremlin, who had acted in the belief that you can destroy the ideas of a genius by driving a pickaxe into his brain.

No one in the Fourth International, least of all James P. Cannon, had any illusions concerning the difficulties that now faced us. The opening battles of the Second World War were already being fought, and it was clear that the Soviet Union itself stood in deadly peril from the German military machine.

The intransigent opposition of the Socialist Workers Party to the new imperialist conflict meant that it could become the object of severe repressive blows, and this was soon to occur in the infamous Minneapolis trial that led to the imprisonment of the central leaders of the SWP, including Cannon.

In Europe, the cadres that had been assembled in the Fourth International suffered terrible blows. Many of them perished in the concentration camps or before firing squads.

Yet the Fourth International survived all the attempts to destroy it. Despite all the enormous pressures, its banner remained spotless. Not a single section violated the principles on which the movement was founded.

Following the war, new militants began to assume leadership responsibilities. This was particularly true in Europe; and it became a practical possibility to establish a new center there.

Cannon welcomed this development. In fact he considered it noteworthy evidence of the viability of the ideas and program of Trotskyism. In the turbulent situations then developing in Europe, he was of the opinion that openings for the Fourth International would appear on all sides, and that an energetic center was needed to take advantage of them.

All the sectors of the world Trotskyist movement, as he saw it, were duty bound to give full support to the new team. Naturally in Jim's book that meant that the American Trotskyists had to strive to be models in this respect.

This fruitful collaboration lasted until 1953. In that year, a painful factional struggle broke out on an international scale. Two factions formed. One was led by the International Secretariat under Pablo.³ The other was led by the

International Committee, James P. Cannon being the leading figure among the supporters of that group.

The differences appeared on several levels. On the organizational plane, various incidents had occurred that indicated a tendency on the part of the International Secretariat to operate in a way different from that practiced under Trotsky's guidance.

For instance, in France they intervened in the section and overturned a majority. In the United States, they intervened in a factional struggle without consulting the leadership of the party, thereby greatly exacerbating the struggle and turning it toward an outcome that was much more damaging than need have been.

On the political level, the International Secretariat went quite wrong in its general political prognosis, holding that the outbreak of World War III was imminent. From this followed a number of conclusions that proved to be disorienting.

This was coupled on the theoretical level by a view put forward by Pablo that for several centuries to come nothing better can be hoped for than workers states deformed at birth; that is, resembling the Soviet Union under Stalin.

In the course of that struggle, Cannon made some contributions that are worth studying on the problems of leadership both on the international level and on the level of national parties. In the following quotation, for instance, he explains his attitude toward the new international leadership that developed in Europe following World War II:

"Our relations with the leadership in Europe at that time were relations of closest collaboration and support. There was general agreement between us. These were unknown men in our party. Nobody had ever heard of them. We helped to publicize the individual leaders, we commended them to our party members, and helped to build up their prestige. We did this, first because we had general agreement, and second because we realized they needed our support. They had yet to gain authority, not only here but throughout the world. And the fact that the SWP supported them up and down the line greatly reinforced their position and helped them to do their great work.

"We went so far as to soft-pedal a lot of our differences with them—and I will mention here tonight some of the many differences, known for the most part only in our leading circles, that we have had in the course of the last seven years.

"One difference was a tendency on their part toward 'Cominternism' in organization matters—a tendency to set up the International as a highly centralized body on the order of the early Comintern, which could make decisions, enforce orders, and so forth in the old Comintern fashion. We said to them all the time, 'You can't do that. The International is too weak, you are too weak. You can't have that kind of an International under present conditions. If you try it, you will only end up in weakening your own authority and creating disruption.

"The old Comintern of Lenin's time had the concept of a highly centralized international organization from the first days, but there was a reason for it then. The reason was that there had been a revolution in Russia, and the whole world movement of socialism was reacting to it. The leaders of the Russian Revolution had an absolutely *decisive* moral and political authority. There were Lenin and Trotsky and Zinoviev and Radek and Bukharin—new great names that the revolutionary workers of the world were recognizing as the authentic leaders of the revolution. There were the men who set up, with the aid of a few others, the Comintern, the Third International.

"They had state power in their hands. They had unlimited funds, which they poured out generously to subsidize and support the foreign parties. When there was a difference of opinion in any party, with two or three factions growing up, they could subsidize delegations to travel from any part of the world to Moscow. The differing groups could have full representation before the executive body to discuss the issues. The international leaders could get a real picture on the spot, hearing the representatives of the different tendencies themselves, before offering advice. And that's what they mainly offered in the early days—advice, and very few orders.

"Speaking of representation, I was a delegate to Moscow five times. And every time I was there, delegates from other factions in the American CP were also there. At the Sixth Congress in

1928, we had about twenty delegates from the U.S., representing all three factions, and the whole expense was paid by the Comintern.

"After the degeneration of the Russian party and the emergence of Stalinism, the centralism of the Comintern—which Trotsky and Lenin had handled like a two-edged sword, which they didn't want to swing carelessly—became in the hands of Stalin an instrument for suppressing all independent thought throughout the movement.

"Instructed by the past experience, we understood the dangers for the present international movement. We believed it would be absolutely wrong to try to imitate a highly centralized international organization when we were so weak, when the ability to send delegates from different parties for common consultation was so limited, and when we could communicate only by correspondence. Under these conditions, we believed it would be better for the center there to limit itself primarily to the role of ideological leader, and to leave aside organizational interference as much as possible, especially outside of Europe.

"In Europe, where the parties are close at hand, it might be organized a little more tightly. But even there, we had misgivings. Comrades who were there several times had misgivings about the tendency toward organizational centralization and discipline, even as applied to the different national parties close at hand in Europe.

"That's one difference we had—a sort of running, smoldering difference. We did not press our criticisms to the very end, although we had many." [*Speeches to the Party*, cited above, pp. 73-5.]

"Now one final word about internationalism. Internationalism will be useful for our party if it has a unifying effect and it will not be useful if it promotes a split or if it encourages a split in any way. Internationalism in our book means international collaboration. International collaboration to work out common ideas and to build up the parties and the leadership. But internationalism doesn't mean—I just want to make this clear as the final point—that leaderships in a national party can be made up or taken apart on order, that they can be removed by mechanical means or that they can be appointed.

"I say a party that cannot select its own leaders is not worth a cent. A party that will permit its leadership to be imposed by any other way except the clear will of its own membership can be as internationalist as it wants to but it wouldn't be worth anything to the International. The real problem of our party, everywhere throughout the world, is to throw up indigenous leaders who have the confidence and support of their own rank and file. I believe we've got that now, at least in the majority—in the decisive majority—and I think this majority is strong enough to lead the party and make it possible for people of different opinions to live within the framework of those conditions I have stated." [*Ibid.*, cited above, p. 163.]

The issues in the 1953 factional struggle were sharply posed, and they finally led to an international split. It is possible that the split could have been avoided. Cannon was certainly of the opinion that we should try to avoid it. But among other handicaps, it was not possible for the top leaders of the SWP to go abroad. That was during the height of the McCarthyite witch-hunt, and the State Department barred known radicals from leaving the country—unless, of course, they were being deported. Consequently we were unable to argue our case at the congress where the international struggle culminated; and Pablo took factional advantage of this situation.

The divisions occurred along political issues and the fight proceeded along those lines. Nonetheless, Jim considered that a deeper problem was involved—the whole question of party building and what can be done in a conscious way to create the necessary leadership team. Jim, in fact, was of the opinion that it was in this area that Lenin made his greatest contribution.

Jim's thinking on this question is best appreciated in his own words, so I am going to take time to give a rather lengthy quotation from a speech he made November 3, 1953, at a National Committee meeting of the SWP. From this quote, you'll get the essence of Jim on internationalism.

"Leadership is the one unsolved problem of the working class of the entire world. The only barrier between the working class of the world and socialism is the unsolved problem of leadership. That is what is meant by 'the question of

2. Max Shachtman (1903-1972), a founder of the American Communist Party, was one of the first to join Cannon in defending Trotsky's views. He opposed defense of the Soviet Union in the 1939 war with Finland and split from the Socialist Workers Party to form the Workers Party, later the Independent Socialist League. At his death he was a leading figure in the right wing of the Socialist Party.

3. Michel Pablo was a Greek Trotskyist who became secretary of the Fourth International after World War II. During the split he was secretary of the International Secretariat faction until his arrest for aiding the Algerian revolution in 1960. Pablo participated in the reunification of the Fourth International in 1963, but split in 1965.

the party.' That is what the *Transitional Program* [the founding resolution of the Fourth International] means when it states that the crisis of the labor movement is the crisis of leadership. That means that until the working class solves the problem of creating the revolutionary party, the conscious expression of the historic process, which can lead the masses in struggle, the issue remains undecided. It is the most important of all questions—the question of the party.

"And if our break with Pabloism—as we see it now clearly—if it boils down to one point and is concentrated in one point, that is it: the question of the party. That seems clear to us now, as we have seen the development of Pabloism in action. The essence of Pabloist revisionism is the overthrow of that part of Trotskyism which is today its most vital part—the conception of the crisis of mankind as the crisis of the leadership of the labor movement summed up in the question of the party.

"Pabloism aims not only to overthrow Trotskyism; it aims to overthrow that part of Trotskyism which Trotsky learned from Lenin. Lenin's greatest contribution to his whole epoch was his idea and his determined struggle to build a vanguard party capable of leading the workers in revolution. And he did not confine his theory to the time of his own activity. He went all the way back to 1871, and said that the decisive factor in the defeat of the first proletarian revolution, the Paris Commune, was the absence of the party of the revolutionary Marxist vanguard, capable of giving the mass movement a conscious program and a resolute leadership. It was Trotsky's acceptance of this part of Lenin in 1917 that made Trotsky a Leninist.

"That is written into the *Transitional Program*, that Leninist concept of the decisive role of the revolutionary party. And that is what the Pabloites are throwing overboard in favor of the conception that the ideas will somehow filter into the treacherous bureaucracy, the Stalinists or reformists, and in some way or another, 'In the Day of the Comet,' the socialist revolution will be realized and carried through to conclusion without a revolutionary Marxist, that is, a Leninist-Trotskyist, party. That is the essence of Pabloism. Pabloism is the substitution of a cult and a revelation for a party and a program.

"The problem of the party has another aspect. The problem of the party is the problem of the leadership of the party. I believe, that just as the problem of the party is the problem the working class has to solve before the struggle against capitalism can be definitively successful—the problem of the party truly is the problem of the leadership of the party.

"You cannot build a revolutionary party without the program. We all know that. In time the program will create the party. But herein is precisely the role of conscious leaders—to save time. Time is 'of the essence' in this epoch when years count for centuries. It is certainly difficult to build a party without leadership, without cadres. As a matter of fact, it can't be done.

"Look over the world, look over all the experiences of the last quarter of a century, in one country after another, where the writings and teachings of Trotsky were available, where the program was known, and what do you see? Where they lacked the leaders to build the party, where they lacked cadres, the party did not amount to much. On the other hand, those parties which threw up leaders capable of working together as a cadre remained firm and solid and consciously prepared their future.

"The leading cadre plays the same decisive role in relation to the party that the party plays in relation to the class . . .

"Given the program, the construction of leading cadres is the key to the construction of revolutionary parties; and the former requires an even higher degree of consciousness and a more deliberate design than the latter. Of course, every party in every generation since the *Communist Manifesto* has had a leadership of a sort. But there has been very little consciousness about its selection, and for that reason, among others, the real problem remained unsolved. The experiences of the past in this respect are rich in lessons on the theme of what not to do.

"The present generation of the revolutionary vanguard, which has the benefit of Lenin and Trotsky, has the supreme duty now to examine the tragic mistakes of the past in this respect in order to avoid them and to replace haphazard methods by a conscious theory and a deliberate



James P. Cannon and other SWP leaders on their way to serve prison terms for internationalist opposition to World War II.

design in the construction of leading cadres.

"First, and perhaps worst, of the kinds of party leadership which we have seen and known, even in the Fourth International, is the unplanned leadership of talented individual stars, pulling in opposite directions, squandering their energies in personal rivalries, quarreling over trifles, and incapable of organizing a sensible division of labor. That has been the tragic experience of many sections of the Fourth International, in particular of the French section. I don't know how things are in France today, but I do know that the French section of the Fourth International will never become a real party until it learns to discipline its individual star performers and make them work together.

"A second kind of leadership is the leadership of a clique. In every leadership clique there is a certain coordination, a certain organization and division of labor, and it sometimes looks good—while it lasts. But a clique is bound together by personal associations—what Trotsky, who hated cliques, called 'chumminess'—and has in it, by that very fact, a fatal flaw—that it can be broken up by personal quarrels. That is the inevitable fate of every political clique.

"There is no such thing, and can be no such thing as a permanent clique, no matter what good friends and chums may be drawn together in a tight, exclusive circle and say to themselves: 'Now we have everything in our hands and we are going to run things fine.' The great winds and waves of the class struggle keep beating upon this little clique. Issues arise. Personal difficulties and frictions develop. And then come personal quarrels and squabbles, meaningless faction fights and senseless splits, and the clique ends in disaster. The party cannot be led by a clique. Not for very long, anyway.

"There is a third method of leadership which I will confess to you frankly I noticed only after I passed my sixtieth birthday. That is the leadership of a cult. I will admit that I lived sixty years in this world before I stumbled over the fact that there are such things as political cults. I began rubbing my eyes when I saw the Johnsonites⁴ operating in our party. I saw a cult bound to a single person, a sort of Messiah. And I thought, 'I'll be damned. You're never too old to learn something new.'

"A cult requires unthinking fools for the rank and file. But that is not all. In order for a cult to exist, it is not enough for a leader to have personal followers—every leader has personal influence more or less—but a cult leader has to be a cultist himself. He has to be a megalomaniac

who gets revelations outside the realm of reality. A megalomaniacal cult leader is liable to jump in any direction at any time, and all the cultists automatically follow, as sheep follow the bellwether, even into the slaughter house.

"That is what happened with the Johnsonites. The cult followed Johnson, not simply for his theory of the Soviet Union—other people have that theory; a lot of people in the world have that theory about 'state capitalism.' The Johnsonites were personal cultist followers of Johnson as a Messiah; and when he finally gave the signal for them to jump out of this party for reasons known only to himself, but allegedly because of some personal grievance he imagined, of which they had no knowledge and which they had just heard about, they all left the party at the same hour, Eastern Standard Time. That is a cult. The Pabloite cult, like any other, is capable of jumping in any direction at any time, whenever the leader gets a revelation. You cannot trust the party of the workers' vanguard to a cult or a cultist leader.

"There is a fourth method of leadership which has been very common. I have seen much of it in my time—that is the leadership of a permanent faction. Here is something that we have to be on our guard about, because we have just gone through a very severe faction fight, and in the course of the fight we have become tightly bound together. It is absolutely necessary for the leadership to see clearly what a temporary faction is, what its legitimate purposes are, what its limits are, and the danger of the faction hardening into permanence.

"There is no greater abomination in the workers' political movement than a permanent faction. There is nothing that can demoralize the internal life of a party more efficiently than a permanent faction. You may say: that is contradicted by the experience of Lenin. Didn't he organize a faction in 1903, the Bolshevik faction, and didn't that remain a hard and fast faction all the way up to the revolution? Not entirely. The faction of Lenin, which split with the Mensheviks in 1903, and subsequently had negotiations with them and at various times united with them in a single party, but nevertheless remained a faction, was a faction only in its outward form.

"In the essence of the matter, the nucleus of the Bolshevik Party of the October Revolution was the Lenin Bolshevik faction. It was a party. And the proof of the fact that it was a party and not an exclusive faction of Lenin was that within the Bolshevik faction there were different tendencies. There were left-wing and right-wing Bolsheviks. At times some of them openly polemicized with Lenin. The Bolsheviks even had splits and reunifications among themselves. Lenin did not consider the Bolshevik faction something he was going to keep with him all his life as a closed corporation.

"In the decisive days of 1917 when he brought

4. The Johnsonites were followers of C.L.R. James (whose pseudonym was J.R. Johnson. A West Indian who was active for a time in the Trotskyist movement in Britain and the United States, James held that the USSR was a capitalist state and opposed defending it against imperialism. He split from the SWP in 1940 as part of Shachtman's faction, rejoined in 1947, and split again in 1951 during the Korean War. James is the author of *Black Jacobins* and other books.

out his April theses,⁵ he showed that his conception was really that of a party by uniting with Trotsky, which made all the difference in the world. It was a party action. And a few months later, when Zinoviev and Kamenev, the very closest collaborators of Lenin, went wrong on the insurrection, he combined with Trotsky to smash them. Lenin's faction was in reality a party.

"We have seen factions which grew out of a separate struggle, crystallized and hardened, and held together after the issues which brought them into being no longer existed. That happened in the old Communist Party.

"Its leading cadre, as a whole, was a fusion of people with different backgrounds. There were the New Yorkers, and some others, who came out of the Socialist Party, whose experience had been in the field of parliamentary socialism, election campaigns, and so on—a purely 'political' grouping. Ruthenberg, Lovestone, etc., represented this background. There was another tendency in the party represented by the 'Westerners'—those who had a syndicalist background, a background of work in the trade union movement, in strikes, in the 'direct action' of the class struggle. Foster, Bill Dunne, Swabeck,⁶ myself, etc., represented this origin.

"We naturally formed different tendencies—each partly right and partly wrong—and from the beginning were always in skirmishes with each other. Eventually these tendencies hardened into factions. Then later, after several years of experience, we learned from each other and the real differences narrowed down. But the faction formations remained. Time after time, the two factions would agree on what was to be done, agree on every resolution for the convention, and still the factions would continue to exist.

'Cannon was saying that the Russians had the honor of achieving the first big victory in the world revolution; but the honor of achieving the final victory in the world revolution will belong to the Americans. Nothing is settled in the world revolution until that battle is won.'

"In such circumstances the factions degenerated into gangs struggling for power, and the degeneration of the Communist Party was greatly facilitated by that. The Comintern should have helped us to unify the cadre, but instead it fed the flames of factionalism in order to fish in the troubled waters to create its own Stalinist faction. Those were bitter times. I began to rebel against that sterile kind of struggle and I made several attempts—years before we were thrown out of the party for Trotskyism—I made several attempts to break up the politically senseless faction formations. A number of us broke away from the Foster gang and formed a separate grouping and united with a group that Weinstone had split off from the Lovestoneites, with the same revolt against this purposeless gang factionalism. We formed a 'middle grouping' with the slogan: 'Dissolve the factions.'

"We carried on a fight for a couple of years to dissolve the factions into the party. But by that

time both the Lovestoneites and the Fosterites had become so hardened in the gang and clique spirit that it was impossible to do it. That contributed to the degeneration of the Communist Party, because permanent factions become cliques and they exclude everybody else. If a permanent faction happens to get control of the leadership of the party and runs the party as a faction, it is bound to exclude others from any real place in the leadership. By that very fact it drives the others into the organization of counter-cliques and counter-factions, and there is no longer a single cadre in the leadership of the party. We saw that happen in the CP. We have to learn something from that experience.

"In our party, basing ourselves on our experiences and our studies, we have had a conception of the leadership not as a number of uncoordinated individual stars; not as a clique; not, in God's name, as a cult; and not as a permanent faction. Our conception of the leadership is that of a leading cadre.

"It is a conscious design, patiently worked at for years and years. A leading cadre, in our conception, has the following basic characteristics: It consists of people who are first of all united on the program, not on every single question that arises in daily work, but on the basic program of Trotskyism. That is the beginning.

"The second feature is that the leading cadre is an *inclusive* and not an *exclusive* selection [emphasis Cannon's]. It does not have a fixed membership, but deliberately keeps the door open all the time for the inclusion of new people, for the assimilation and development of others, so that the leading cadre is flexibly broadening in numbers and in influence all the time."

And this I hope you'll watch during this convention. Cannon continues:

"Our cadre has another feature. It constructs the National Committee as a widely democratic representation of the party. I do not know how the leadership is constructed in other parties, but our party here is not led exclusively by the central political working group in New York. The leadership, we have always emphasized, is not the Secretariat. It is not the Political Committee. It is not the Editorial Board. It is the National Committee plenum. The plenum includes the Secretariat, the Political Committee, and the Editorial Board, *plus* the leading comrades from all the districts of the party [emphasis Cannon's].

"These district representatives, as you know, are not handpicked in New York and promoted by special maneuvers. We all know how to do that sort of thing and deliberately refrain from doing it. The central leaders never interfere with the deliberations of the nominating commission at party conventions. The district representatives are freely selected by the delegates from their districts and confirmed by the nominating commission. They really represent their branches or locals, and when they sit in the plenum you have a really democratic representation of the entire party. That is one reason why our plenums have such a commanding authority in the party.

"When the plenum meets, we can say that we are the leadership because we really are. It is a small convention every time we have a plenum of the National Committee. That is part of our deliberate program of constructing a representative leadership which is democratically controlled.

"A third feature of our conception of the cadre, which we work on consciously and deliberately all the time, is to cultivate among all the leading people the ability to work together; not to be individual stars; not to be wiseacres who make problems of themselves—but people who fit into a machine; work with others; recognize that there is no such thing as an unimportant person, that anybody who stands for the program and is sent into the National Committee by his branch or local has got something to give. The task of the central leaders of the party is to open the door for him, find out what he can do, and help him to

train himself to do better in the future.

"The ability to work together is an essential feature of our conception of the leading cadre, and the next feature is that of a division of labor. It is not necessary for one or two wise guys to know everything and do everything. It is much better, much firmer, much surer if you have a broad selection of people, each one of whom contributes something to the decisions and specializes in work for which he is qualified, and coordinates his work with others.

"I must say, I take great satisfaction in the way the leading cadre of our party has evolved and developed in the period since the open fight with the Pablo-Cochran revisionists began. I think they have given the world movement a model demonstration of a strong group of people, of varied talents and experiences, learning how to coordinate their efforts, divide the labor between them, and work collectively so that the strength of each one becomes the strength of all. We end up with a powerful machine, which combines the merits of all its individual members into a multiplied power.

"And you not only combine the merits and get good out of them. You can sometimes also get good and positive results from a combination of faults. That also takes place in a properly organized and coordinated cadre. That thought was expressed to me in a letter from Trotsky. What I am telling you here is not exclusively what I have seen and experienced and thought up in my own head. It is not only our experience, but also a great deal of *personal instruction from Trotsky* [this and following emphases are Hansen's]. He formed the habit of writing to me very often after he found out that I was willing to listen and did not take offense at friendly criticism.

"He kept advising me all the time about the problems of leadership. As far back as 1935 and 1936, in the fight with the Musteites and the Oehlerites,⁷ he gave us such advice. He always referred to Lenin, how Lenin had put his cadre together. He said, Lenin would take one man who had an impulse for action, smelled opportunities, and had a tendency to run ahead of himself, and balance him off against a man who was a little more cautious—and the compromise between the two produced a balanced decision, which rounded out to the benefit of the party.

"He told me, for example, in one letter where he was advising me to be very careful and not to make an exclusive slate for the National Committee, and not to eliminate people who have some faults which I especially don't like, such as hesitation, conciliationism, and indecisiveness in general; he said, you know Lenin used to say about Kamenev, that he was a constitutional vacillator; he always tended at the moment of decision to 'soften up,' to vacillate and conciliate. Kamenev, as a matter of fact, belonged to the faction of Bolshevik conciliators in the period after 1907 to 1917, with a tendency toward conciliation with the Mensheviks, but he remained in the Bolshevik Party.

"And Lenin used to say—as Trotsky explained it to me—we need Kamenev in the Central Committee because his tendency to waver and conciliate is the reflection of a certain tendency of that kind in the party ranks that we want to keep our finger on. When Kamenev speaks we know that there is a certain sentiment within the party of the same kind that we have to take into consideration. And while we do not accept Kamenev's wavering and conciliationism, we go slow and take it into account, because when we move we want to take the whole party with us. If he raises too many objections, we stop awhile and devote a little more time to education in the party ranks to make sure that our ranks will be solid.

"Our strength is in our *combination*, both of our faults and of our virtues. That, taken on the

5. "On the Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution," known as the "April Theses," was the resolution submitted by Lenin to an April 1917 conference of the Bolshevik Party. Adoption of the theses set the party on a course toward socialist revolution in Russia.

6. Charles Ruthenberg (1882-1927) was a leader of the Socialist Party left wing, and a founder of the American CP. He was general secretary of the party at his death. Jay Lovestone was a founder of the American CP in the 1920s. He became the leader of a rightist faction, which for a time—with Stalin's backing—took control of the party. Stalin's leftward shift in 1929 led to the expulsion of Lovestone and his remaining followers. Lovestone maintained an organization until the opening of World War II. During the cold war he was an organizer of the AFL-CIO's proimperialist and anticommunist activities around the world. William Z. Foster (1881-1961) joined the CP in 1921 after having achieved renown as an organizer of the national steel strike of 1919. When Earl Browder, Lovestone's successor as top party leader, fell out of favor with Stalin, Foster landed the top post. Bill Dunne was a leader of the American CP. He remained with the Stalinists after Cannon and three of his brothers (Miles, Grant, and Vincent) were expelled from Trotskyism. Dunne was expelled from the CP at the end of World War II. Arne Swabeck (1890-) was a founder of the American Communist Party, the Communist League of America, and the Socialist Workers Party. He was a leader of the SWP until the 1960s when he became a Maoist. He left the SWP in 1967.

7. In December 1934 the Communist League of America fused with the American Workers Party headed by A.J. Muste (1885-1967), a former protestant minister and pacifist who became involved in labor organizing. Following the fusion, Cannon proposed orienting toward a left wing that was growing in the Socialist Party. His proposals were opposed by a faction led by Hugo Oehler, which split from the party in 1935 after failing to win a majority. When Cannon proposed entering the Socialist Party to win over its left wing, Muste was head of a faction that opposed this on tactical grounds, but the entry proposal won a majority and the Trotskyists joined the SP in June 1936. (They were expelled by the reformist leaders a year later.) Muste left the Trotskyist movement in the summer of 1936, returning to his ministry and to radical pacifism. At the time of his death he was playing a prominent role in the anti-Vietnam War movement.

whole, is what I call the *cadre concept of leadership*. This cadre, for the last year almost, has been constituted as a faction—that is, the great majority of the cadre. We have engaged in a faction struggle. But what was that cadre organized into a faction for? It was not the whole cadre; it was the majority, but not all. It didn't include the comrades from Buffalo and Youngstown—there were some differences there at first but they have been virtually eliminated in the course of the struggle; the decisions of this plenum are all unanimous. But at the start, the majority of the cadre constituted itself into a faction, meeting by itself, making its own decisions, and so on.

"However, this faction was not formed for the purpose of having a faction. It was not formed as a permanent combination of good fellows who are going to stick together from now to doomsday and not let anybody else join. It is not a gang, nor a clan, nor a clique. It is just simply a *politico-military organization* formed for a certain purpose. But what was the purpose? The purpose was to defeat and isolate the revisionist faction of Pablo-Cochran.⁸ That aim has been achieved.

"That being the case, what is the duty of this faction now? Are we going to hold together for old time's sake, form a sort of 'Grand Army of the Republic'—the only ones allowed to wear ribbons, demand special privileges and honors? No. The duty of this faction now is to say: 'The task is finished, the faction is no longer needed, and the faction must be dissolved into the party.' The leadership of the party belongs henceforth to the cadre as a whole, assembled at this plenum. All problems, all questions for discussion, should be taken directly into the party branches.

"I would like to start off this new stage of party life by announcing here in the name of the majority faction of the National Committee its unanimous decision: the majority faction that was formed for the purposes of the struggle, having accomplished its task, hereby dissolves itself into the party." [Speeches to the Party, cited above, pp. 181-92.]

I want to emphasize the fact that I left out some sentences and even paragraphs from Jim's comments. If you would like to see what I left out, I would suggest that you buy a copy of the book. It's available at the literature table.

Reunification of the International

Now let me turn to the reunification of the International Secretariat and the International Committee, which occurred in 1963. Jim's role in this was decisive.

A minority of forces on both sides refused to participate in this reunification. On the side of the International Secretariat, the leading figure who split away was Juan Posadas; on the side of the International Committee, Gerry Healy.

Cannon had begun raising the question of reunification right after the Kremlin crushed the incipient political revolution that flared up in Hungary in 1956. Cannon did this because of the stand taken by the International Secretariat in opposing the Kremlin's action there and in Poland. The stand taken by the International Secretariat was the same as that of the International Committee. The two factions thus had an identical political position on an issue of key importance to the world revolution.

Taking this development in connection with other positions adopted by the International Secretariat, Cannon came to the conclusion that Pablo had retreated, at least temporarily, on the political issues that had led to the factional struggle and that this opened the way for a resolution of the split on the basis of a principled program. It should be noted that Cannon took this view before the victory of the Cuban revolution, on which both factions reached common judgments by and large, especially on the political positions.

Cannon's position can easily be understood in light of his views on the evils of permanent

8. Bert Cochran joined the Communist League of America in 1934 and later played a prominent role in organizing the Socialist Workers Party's activity in the United Auto Workers union. He became deeply pessimistic about the prospects of the U.S. working class during the McCarthyite witch-hunt and led a split from the party in 1953 in support of Pablo's positions. Cochran's grouping formed the Socialist Union, which broke openly from Trotskyism in mid-1954, splitting with the International Secretariat. The group disappeared shortly thereafter. Cochran is the author of many books and a resident at Columbia University's Institute on Communist Affairs.



The SWP, in part because of the example and education provided by James P. Cannon, recognized that U.S. and Vietnamese working people had a common interest in opposing the U.S. invasion.

factions and of dead-end factionalism. As he put it in one of his lectures in 1942 on the history of American Trotskyism: "Politics is not religion; political disputes do not remain forever undecided. Life decides."

As an instance of this, one can point to the fact that life had decided as to the validity of Pablo's prognosis that World War III was going to break out on or about 1954.

What caused the long delay of about six years from the time Cannon was prepared to move toward reunification on a principled basis until it was consummated in 1963?

That is a story worth a book in and of itself. At bottom the delay was caused by the dead-end factionalism of two leaders: Gerry Healy⁹ on the side of the International Committee and Michel Pablo on the side of the International Secretariat. Both of them paid lip service to the idea of reunification while both of them sabotaged it.

Cannon easily saw through Pablo's tactics. In Healy's case he thought for some time that only errors were involved. Eventually Healy himself had to admit that he was playing a double game, and with the accumulation of further facts, Cannon came to understand to perfection the miserable motives guiding Healy's course of action.

The reunification made possible some new gains for the world Trotskyist movement, particularly in connection with the great protest movement that developed against the role of American imperialism in Vietnam in the 1960s and early seventies.

In 1969 new differences developed in the Fourth International that still remain to be resolved. However, all this constitutes another subject. And none of it would alter our conclusions as to the stature of James P. Cannon as an internationalist. In his final years he did not change. He never considered himself to be more than a disciple of Lenin and Trotsky, although he felt that in at least one field he was an expert—how to apply their teachings to the American sector of the world revolution.

Three Stages

Let me recapitulate Cannon's development as an internationalist. It can be divided into three stages.

In the first stage, we find a young American who has the good fortune to gain an understanding of what will be achieved once humanity is able to bring scientific planning into economics on a worldwide scale.

9. Gerry Healy was the central leader of the British section at the time of the factional struggle in 1953. He supported the International Committee.

Later he opposed the 1963 reunification, using as a pretext the view that Cuba remained capitalist. Healy's primary goal was to protect his undemocratic and increasingly cultist regime in the British section from international scrutiny and influences.

After splitting from the Fourth International in 1963, Healy's British grouping (renamed the Workers Revolutionary Party), along with the rump International Committee he sought to maintain, steadily disintegrated.

This young person decides to dedicate his life to help achieve this goal, and consciously engages in the class struggle to help bring it about. He does not proceed as a "loner" but as a member of the most militant movement on the scene, the Industrial Workers of the World.

Then the effort breaks down because of international events—the First World War and the collapse of the Second International.

In the second stage of Cannon's development, the situation is righted by a new colossal event, the first successful proletarian revolution. Although the revolution occurs in a single country, it has titanic effect internationally.

Jim now becomes a Bolshevik. He has advanced qualitatively as an internationalist.

His work as a militant in the cause of the world revolution is now much more effective.

To his previous experience in the class struggle, Cannon has consciously combined what was clearly the most important lesson of the Russian revolution—the need for a combat party built on the Leninist model. Cannon sets out to build such a party in the United States.

This effort likewise breaks down. The causes include most notably the degeneration of the first workers state and rise of Stalinism coupled with a temporary stabilization of capitalism.

In the third stage, the situation is righted by Jim's becoming acquainted with Trotsky's analyses and program of struggle.

The most salient element in this is the increasingly dialectical view that Cannon has of the interrelationship between the building of a party in any country and the building of an international. Two interrelated processes.

Under Trotsky's direct guidance Cannon comes to appreciate in particular the role that consciousness can play in the selection of leadership, which is the most vital aspect of party building. From an expert in the class struggle itself, Cannon has advanced to an expert in finding openings and points of support in the class struggle for a revolutionary party, and finally he has advanced to an expert in constructing the team of leaders required for a revolutionary party.

After reaching this level, Cannon can be considered to be an internationalist of the first rank.

He continued to learn. He continued to play an active role. But this amounted to bringing all his experience and know-how to bear in concrete situations faced by the Socialist Workers Party and the world Trotskyist movement.

What Cannon sought above all, as I have indicated, was a Fourth International that would conduct itself in such a model way as to offer the maximum assistance in the building of strong national sections; that is, sections endowed with a leadership capable of conducting a proletarian revolution to victory.

Along with this he sought a model Socialist Workers Party, among the best in collaborating with Trotskyist parties and groups in other countries, and likewise among the best in applying international revolutionary lessons to the American scene.

Continued on next page

"To me it seems perfectly simple—but then I'm not well educated. It seems like there are only two classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. . ."

"There you go again with your silly formula!" cried the student.

"Only two classes," the soldier went on doggedly. "And whoever isn't on one side is on the other. . ."

That classic encounter between the middle-class student and the worker in uniform is from John Reed's account of how the Russian workers took power in 1917, *Ten Days That Shook the World*.

Admittedly, this gem of political wisdom is not the end-all of Marxism. But it is the bedrock on which the Marxist analytical method is built.

By starting with the reality of class relations and class conflict,

In Defense of Marxism

By Leon Trotsky. New York. Pathfinder Press. 211 pp.

Marxism demystifies political issues that often seem bewildering in their complexity. An invaluable example of how this is done is found in Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism*.

This classic work was born of a major conflict of ideas that occurred in the Socialist Workers Party in 1939-40. The articles and letters in the book comprise Trotsky's contribution to that historic internal party struggle.

It was a time of deep-going social crisis. World War II was already under way in Europe and Washington was preparing its entry.

In Germany, Hitler's concentration camps were full and the gas chambers working overtime. In the Soviet Union, the privilege-hungry Stalinist bureaucrats were bringing down massive repression.

Then, in the spring of 1939, Stalin signed a "nonaggression pact" with Hitler. This evoked worldwide revulsion. Capitalist propagandists here and elsewhere seized on the opportunity to pound the anti-Soviet drum.

There was more grist for the propaganda mill when, as Hitler drove through Poland, the Soviet army occupied eastern Poland and

Pathfinder's Choice for June

A Lesson in Class Politics

invaded Finland.

The U.S. media had a field day. "Poor little Finland" became their cause. Never mind that for years Finland was in the grip of a ruthless military dictator. Never mind that the Western capitalist powers, so concerned with Finnish "independence," saw the country as a possible springboard for an attack on the USSR.

The Soviet action—motivated by considerations of military defense against such possible attack—was demagogically depicted as the action of "red imperialism" seeking to exploit and oppress a tiny, innocent neighbor.

This wave of propaganda—so similar to the recent pious outcry around the Vietnamese involvement in Kampuchea—had a deep impact.

This was particularly so among the many middle-class intellectuals who had become radicalized by the depression.

The effect was felt even within the Socialist Workers Party. In a number of cities, SWP members had been recruited from among this radical middle-class milieu. Many such members had little direct contact with the workers movement and had not absorbed that basic ingredient of Marxism—the use of class criteria in analyzing events and responding to them.

Despite its implacable opposition to bureaucratic rule, the SWP had always stood for the defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism. And, when push came to shove with the Polish and Finnish events, the majority of the party stood with Trotsky in maintaining that position.

This evoked a near-hysterical opposition from a minority in the party, led principally by James Burnham and Max Shachtman. It began over Poland and Finland and ended with their challenging the most fundamental concepts of Marxism.

Trotsky characterized the minority as a "petty bourgeois opposition." This was no epithet but a scientific appraisal of their arrival at false positions because of failure to employ a working-class ap-

proach.

All of this is presented in Trotsky's book with a depth and brilliance that defies brief summary. One can only say that this is a book that warrants study and re-study.

It provides the indispensable key—class analysis—in comprehending and responding to such events as the Vietnamese role in Kampuchea, the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, and the Sino-Soviet split.

In explaining why the Soviet Union had to be defended against imperialism despite the crimes of Stalinism, Trotsky illuminated the point by explaining that the USSR was like a trade union with state power. And that it was necessary to defend it despite the bureaucratic misrule of Stalin, for the same reason that it was necessary to defend the unions against the bosses despite the fact that they are misled by a privileged officialdom.

The SWP minority scoffed at this "oversimplified" analogy. But union activists with experience in the class struggle had no difficulty in comprehending the power and validity of the argument.

Workers learn from hard experience that you have to get the union bureaucrat off your back—but the boss is the main enemy. It's then not so difficult to comprehend why a defeat for Soviet troops in Finland would be a victory for world capitalism and a setback for the workers.

Or why Vietnam was staying the

hand of U.S. imperialism when it threw its strength behind the Kampuchean opposition to the Pol Pot capitalist dictatorship.

Similarly with the Chinese border attack on Vietnam. Anyone who thinks it is impossible for the imperialists to use the bureaucratic caste that holds power in one workers state to do its dirty work against another workers state need only consider how the employers can employ corrupt union bureaucrats to do their bidding against other unions.

That was certainly the case when the gang that runs the Teamsters was used by the growers to try to break the United Farm Workers.

By not losing sight of the fact that the growers were behind the Teamster bureaucrats, the farm workers were able to respond in a way that ultimately defeated that particular union-busting ploy. One reason was that rank-and-file Teamsters began to recognize that their union had nothing to gain from what their officialdom was doing in behalf of the growers. Is it any less likely that the Chinese workers will not see the reactionary character of what their bureaucratic rulers are doing?

The battlefields of Kampuchea and Vietnam may seem distant from those of Delano, California, or other scenes of U.S. class battles. But like the song says, it really is one struggle.

To deepen your comprehension of that reality there are few books more valuable than *In Defense of Marxism*.

—Harry Ring

25% Discount Offer

In Defense of Marxism is available at a special discount rate of \$2.95. The regular price is \$3.95. Order from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, New York 10014. Send check or money order or return this coupon to one of the socialist bookstores listed on page 27. Offer expires July 31.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

...Cannon

Continued from preceding page

The question might be asked, "How well did Cannon succeed in this, particularly on the international level?"

I think the question is somewhat misleading. The Fourth International consists of the sum of the national leaderships. And the primary test they face is their capacity to build combat parties in their own countries. How well they meet the test will be seen in the period now opening up.

As for Jim, he left some speeches and some writings on the subject. He left his example. And—not without importance—he left some cadres able to start on a higher level than was available to him when he first began.

In closing, I would like to let Jim have the last word, offering some advice to revolutionary socialists when he had reached the age of seventy [from *The First Ten Years of American Communism*, Pathfinder, pp. 332-3].

"A revolutionary party begins with ideas representing social reality, and cannot live without them. And such ideas, like money, do not grow on trees. They have to be taken where they can be found and valued for their own sake, regardless of their point of origin. A would-be revolutionist who doesn't recognize this had better quit before he starts.

"The original ideas of the modern socialist movement in all countries of the world, including

Russia, had to be taken from Marx and Engels, who happened to be Germans. The continuation and development of these 'German' ideas into revolutionary action and victory was the work of Russians, Lenin and Trotsky in the first place, who were internationalists and avowed disciples of the great originators. Revolutionary parties which sprang up in all countries of the world after the First World War were inspired by the original German ideas, which had become Russian ideas and actions, and lived on them in their early years.

"The same is true of the entire historical period since the death of Lenin in 1924. The analysis of the new and complicated problem of Stalinism, fascism and the Second World War, and the programmatic ideas for a revolutionary opposition, all came again from the Russians, in this case Trotsky and his collaborators in the Soviet Union.

"Of course, it might be flattering to one's personal conceit and sense of national pride—if one is bothered by such anachronistic absurdities at this hour of the clock—to organize a brand new 'American' party with homegrown American ideas, new or old. But no such ideas—none that were any good, that is—were to be found in the United States when the first attempt to organize a revolutionary party in this country was made in 1919. They were not to be found when a handful of us made a new beginning in 1928. And they have not been found in the

intervening 30-odd years.

"To be sure, there have been numerous attempts to improvise a purely American party but they all melted away like last year's snow. That's the way it had to be, for there is no American road separate and apart from the international road. America has produced some great technologists, engineers and professional baseball players, and experts in other fields. But, so far, no creative political thinkers for the age of internationalism.

"In this age of internationalism, those who have seriously wanted to build a revolutionary party in this country have had no choice but to look elsewhere for programmatic ideas. Draper says that our espousal of the Trotskyist program in 1928 'helped to perpetuate the dependence of all branches and off-shoots of the American communist movement on the Russian revolution and Russian revolutionaries.' That's true. But what of it?

"The famous bandit, Willie Sutton, was once asked by a reporter why he specialized exclusively on robbing banks. Willie, a thinking man's thief, answered right off the bat: 'Because that's where the money is.' In the entire historical period since the collapse of the international socialist movement in the First World War up to the present, revolutionary national parties in every country have had to look to the Russian Revolution and its authentic leaders. That's where the ideas are."

Marroquin: 'Mexican government does not represent majority'

With this issue the 'Militant' continues its publication of major excerpts from Héctor Marroquín's deportation hearing. The hearing took place April 3-5 in Houston, Texas, before Immigration and Naturalization Service Judge James Smith.

Marroquín—who is seeking political asylum in this country—is a trade unionist and a member of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance. He was forced to flee Mexico in 1974 to avoid being victimized by the regime for his political beliefs.

At the deportation hearing, Marroquín testified and offered documentary proof and expert witnesses on behalf of his claim for asylum. Six days after the hearing, Judge Smith, ignoring the evidence, denied asylum and ordered Marroquín deported from the United States.

The ruling—and the hearing itself—made it clear that Marroquín is being persecuted by the U.S. government because of his socialist views.

Smith's decision is currently under appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals in Washington, D.C.

In the excerpts from the hearing, below, Margaret Winter is Marroquín's attorney; James Smith is the immigration judge; and Daniel Kahn is the INS prosecuting attorney.



Cop drags peasant off land. Repression of peasants and workers in Mexico led Marroquín to join with other students discussing ways to achieve a just society.

Winter: Will you describe your political development at the university?

Marroquín: Well, we started to form discussion groups on campus. We wanted to see which way was the more correct way for the student movement. We wanted to relate the student movement more closely to a perspective of social change, to a perspective of opposing the present antidemocratic regime in Mexico.

So this discussion group eventually evolved into the Student Revolutionary Committee (CER). The conclusion to which we came was that the student

Smith: I am observing his demeanor and he is reciting this very well.

Winter: Your honor, I must simply state that I don't agree, for the record.

I must also state that yesterday Mr. Kahn made Mr. Marroquín's political beliefs the focus of the bond hearing, that Mr. Marroquín gave a long cross-examination on the subject of communism and socialism and political ideology. I think that we are certainly entitled—when the whole subject of our political asylum claim is that he is being persecuted for his political beliefs—to develop what those beliefs were, what his beliefs really were, and what activity flows from those beliefs.

Smith: I agree wholeheartedly, but it could be more terse is my whole point.

Winter: I can only state that for our purposes we believe that it can't be. We are certainly not being repetitive.

Kahn: I've heard the same thing twenty times.

Marroquín: Can I make an observation?

Smith: Go ahead.

Marroquín: Everything that I say is perfectly accurate. The conclusion that we came to—and this is the center of the political charges that the Mexican government made against me—[is that] the Mexican government does not represent the interests of the majority of the people. The Mexican government only represents the interests of the few that profit out of this exploitation and oppression.

In order to end the growing misery, the growing oppression, the growing attacks on democratic rights [we concluded that it was necessary] to replace the Mexican government. That what we needed was a government of the workers and peasants. And that was our perspective from the very beginnings of our discussions.

Smith: Did you ever register to vote in Mexico?

Marroquín: I did not.

Smith: At what age can you register in Mexico?

Marroquín: I believe it was twenty-one and then changed to eighteen.

One-party rule

Winter: Mr. Marroquín, how many parties are there in Mexico? How many registered political parties were there at the time?

Marroquín: Two. And I believe there is a third. One political party is the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, which in English is translated to Institutional Revolutionary Party. The other party is the Partido de Acción Nacional, the National Action Party. And the other party is the Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Mexicana, Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution.

But in Mexico, people do not feel very motivated to vote, among other things, because of the kinds of illegality through which the ruling party controls the elections. In Mexico, the ruling party that has been in power for the last fifty years, for the last half century—

Winter: What party is that?

Marroquín: The Partido Revolucionario Institucional. They control the way the votes are taken. And the Mexican people are very suspicious and, in fact, very convinced that everything is a fraud because this political party always wins. Every six years they always win.

Winter: For how many years have they been in power?

Marroquín: Fifty years.

Winter: Did any of the registered parties represent the workers or the peasants? That is, could you have voted for the party of your choice if you had wanted to?

Marroquín: No, because the parties of my choice were not allowed to participate in elections.

Smith: What political party did you affiliate with, if any?

Marroquín: At the time the kind of political party that I would have affiliated to in Mexico did not exist. It came into existence later.

Smith: And what was that?

Marroquín: The political party that was founded in 1977 known as the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, Revolutionary Workers Party, which I consider to be an honest political party with the correct political program—[a party] which up until now was not granted the right to participate in elections.

Smith: They're not on the ballot now.

Marroquín: The ruling party does not allow them to be on the ballot . . . The other political parties that existed at the time did not represent an alternative for me. Did not represent a perspective, a correct perspective of social change, a correct perspective of building a new society in Mexico which was democratic, where misery wouldn't exist, where exploitation wouldn't exist.

Student movement

Winter: You were talking about a political organization at the university with which you became involved, isn't that true?

Marroquín: Yes.

Winter: And what was that?

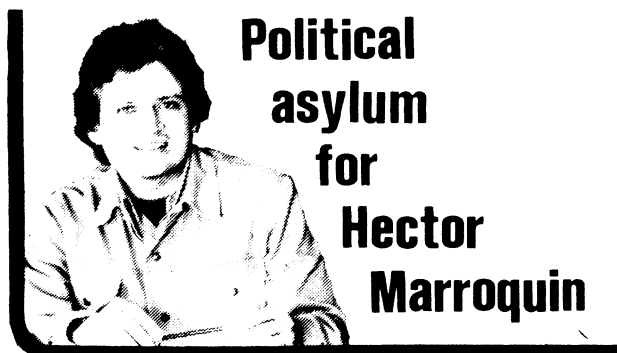
Marroquín: The Student Revolutionary Committee.

Winter: Was that also known as the CER?

Marroquín: Yes.

Winter: And will you describe what the goals and activities were of the CER?

Marroquín: At the beginning, when I joined this group formally, around March of 1973, it was just a discussion group to define political perspectives. We were later involved in defending student rights and, in particular, several students who were being victimized on campus because of their political activities. Several students were expelled from campus, for example, for participating in defending those students. We participated also in different union activities.



Political asylum for Hector Marroquin

movement had to relate itself more closely to the struggle of working people in Mexico—to the struggle of the peasants, to the struggle of the most exploited and oppressed, and to the struggle of every victim of oppression and every victim of attacks on basic democratic rights in Mexico.

We came to another conclusion and that was that the Mexican government does not represent the interests of the majority of the people. That the Mexican regime does not represent the interests of the working people, the peasants, the students, and the teachers which make the overwhelming majority of the population in Mexico.

Kahn: Objection, your honor. This oratory is not responsive to this problem.

Smith: We're on page eleven on the next to the last paragraph [of Marroquín's pamphlet *My Story*]. Go ahead, sir.

Winter: Your honor, I would like to make a comment—

Smith: Should I read you the paragraph?

Winter:—About Mr. Kahn's objection.

Smith: Oh, Mr. Kahn's objection is well taken. We were reciting exactly almost verbatim from page eleven of *My Story*.

Winter: May I make two remarks, your honor?

Smith: Go ahead.

Winter: The value of having a live witness rather than a cold record is too obvious and is too much of a constitutional guarantee.

Kahn: When it's transcribed it comes out the same way.

Winter: I hope that your honor is observing Mr. Marroquín's demeanor. I hope that you're listening to him and that you are—

The fight for the Equal Rights Amendment



Militant Anne Teesdale

By Suzanne Haig

Last October Congress voted to extend the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment from March 1979 to June 1982. Since that victory, however, the ERA has suffered a string of defeats.

It failed to pass in Oklahoma, North Carolina, and Florida. In Illinois the legislature voted down a proposal to require a simple majority rather than a three-fifths vote to ratify constitutional amendments.

South Dakota voted to declare their ratification "null and void" on the grounds that the original deadline had passed. In addition, Washington State, Idaho, and Arizona have filed law suits challenging the extension. Nebraska, Tennessee, and Idaho have voted to rescind their earlier ratification.

The capitalist media have seized upon these setbacks to declare the ERA dead and buried. Many of the major newspapers ran ERA obituaries around March 22, the anniversary of the amendment's passage by Congress.

The *New York Times*, in an editorial titled "Happy Anniversary E.R.A." stated, "Even if three more states endorse it before the new deadline in June 1982, challenges to the validity of the extension as well as rescissions of past endorsements could prevent the amendment's adoption."

In a March 21 article, the *Times* attributed the ERA defeats to its claim that "many women fear that the amendment would undermine their traditional roles."

The *Washington Post* echoed this theme, calling "chances for approval increasingly bleak." It attributed the votes against the ERA to rural and conservative women who "see it as a symbol of permissiveness."

Liberals and conservatives

The line put forward by these liberal papers was not much different from that of conservative columnist Patrick Buchanan.

In a March 22 column that appeared in the *New York Daily News*, Buchanan declared that the "popular case for ERA is irrevocably lost."

His reason? "ERA was dead," he claimed, "when

its more avid acolytes came out of their closets and conceded that they wanted the courts to create the sort of unisex society the people would never approve at the polling booths."

The *New York Times* editorial suggests that women don't really need the ERA anyway. "That cause [women's rights] rushes ahead even without E.R.A. . . . Progress will not be undone because 15 state legislatures have so far said no to E.R.A."

The editorial even found some good in defeats for the ERA, arguing that these prevented "tampering recklessly with other freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution." Astonishing as it seems, the *Times* implies that passage of the ERA could open up a Pandora's box of right-wing amendments.

Despite the wishful thinking of bourgeois commentators that ERA supporters will just give up and go away, the ERA still remains the central issue in the fight for women's rights. It is the focal point of the struggle to bring the legal status of women in line with the economic and social changes of the past two decades. It is a test of strength of whether women will or will not move forward on any front.

The ERA is not dead or defeated. It is, however, in serious trouble. The press coverage reflects the ruling-class lineup against ratification.

Given this situation, supporters of the ERA need to begin a sober discussion of the forces we are up against.

ERA a class issue

The capitalist media and politicians of the Democratic and Republican parties portray the fight over the ERA as simply a battle between women's liberationists and the right wing. This is a smokescreen designed to obscure the forces that are really behind the ERA defeats—big business and its government—and to disguise the fact that the ERA issue is a class issue.

The drive to defeat the ERA is part of the general attack on the working class, ranging from ripoffs at the gas pump, to Carter's 7 percent wage guidelines, to unemployment and environmental destruction.

The big industrial unions are increasingly becoming the focus of the employer class's attack on

working people, for they stand in the way of a frontal assault on the entire working class.

The employers' attack hit women with a special vengeance. Women's social, economic, and legal equality, symbolized in the fight for the ERA, is incompatible with the capitalist system based on inequality—a system where the tiny minority that owns the corporations and banks extracts maximum profit from the labor of the working majority.

The employers profit from maintaining the myth that women's role is in the home doing housework, cooking, and raising children.

Unless this social mythology is accepted by the majority of women and men, the average woman will not tolerate the idea that her work is worth less than a man's and that she should therefore get less pay than he does.

Lower wages for women exerts a downward pressure on the wages of all workers. Inequality divides the workers along sex lines, pitting men against women. It impedes the development of class solidarity. The male worker is made to think that his higher wages depend upon the female worker getting less.

Until recently, the millions of women entering the work force rarely questioned the fact that they got lower pay, less job security, fewer fringe benefits, and were segregated into jobs that were largely non-union. The employers reaped greater profits from this situation.

The fight for women's rights and changes in the composition of the work force have begun to call this inequality into question. Women now make up 43 percent of the work force. Despite attempts to reverse this process, more and more women are seeking jobs as the economic crisis deepens.

Women's fight on the job

This influx into the work force has increased the self-confidence and economic independence of women. The employers' prerogative to control women—bringing them into the work force when needed and kicking them out afterwards—is being challenged by the growing self-assertiveness of women. Large numbers of women are simply refusing to withdraw voluntarily from the labor market as they were driven to do at the end of World War II.

Women's challenge to the employers' prerogatives has had an impact on the entire working class.

As the past ten to fifteen years have shown, any successful fight for the right of a superexploited part of the working class, such as Blacks and women, inevitably leads to a battle in the workplace to upgrade jobs, institute affirmative action, equalize wages, organize the unorganized, and win social benefits such as abortion coverage, child care, and maternity benefits.

Such a fight increases the confidence of those involved and strengthens and unifies the working class as a whole.

If the ERA were passed, it would have ramifications for the entire working class. It would impel other struggles forward. This process goes directly against the offensive that big business must carry out to increase its profits. Big business wants to drive down all workers' wages even more and keep the work force divided and cowering.

The employers have not yet accepted a massive integration of women into the industrial work force. As the crisis deepens, they are trying to drive women out of the plants, mills, and yards. But women have a different idea about getting and keeping the higher-paying industrial jobs that were previously denied them.

Changes in the unions

Women's fight for equality in the workplace has been strengthened by changes in the labor movement. Take the *Weber* case. Brian Weber, a white lab technician, is challenging an affirmative-action program negotiated by the United Steelworkers (USWA). The growing understanding of steelworkers and other unionists that any discrimination within the labor movement threatens the unions as a whole has resulted in a campaign by labor against Weber's suit. This is a significant change from past hostility toward affirmative action by most union officials.

Such changes in the unions show the potential for an alliance between women and labor in the fight for the ERA.

The growing readiness of the working class to unite and fight back is shown by the recent strike in Newport News, Virginia. There shipyard workers, fighting for recognition of their union, United Steelworkers Local 8888, are standing up united—white, Black, male, female—to the combined forces of Tenneco Inc., the cops, courts, and government.

In their battle against right-to-work Virginia, these workers are taking the fight to organize the South a step further. In doing so, they are taking the fight to ratify the ERA forward as well.

At the District 31 women's conference held in February, Lynn Williams, international secretary of the USWA, explained why the fights against right-to-work laws and for the ERA are connected:

"If anyone should have doubt about that community of interests [between the labor movement and organizations fighting for women's equality] it should be quickly dispelled by two lists which I think have to do with the touchstone issues of the labor movement and the American women's movement. One is the list of twenty states that have so-called right-to-work laws or, accurately, right-to-work-for-less laws. And the other is the roll, the dishonor roll, of the fifteen states where the legislatures have not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment. It is not a coincidence, I would suggest, that a dozen states, a full 80 percent of the unratified states are also right-to-work states."

Take fight to labor

Understanding the rulers' offensive and the labor movement's response helps us understand what it will take to win the ERA. We are living in a different economic and political period than the early 1970s when the ERA passed Congress and was ratified by more than thirty states without a big campaign on the part of women's rights organizations. ERA has broader popular support today than it did then, but it hasn't been ratified by a state legislature in twenty-eight months.

Today employers and their political hirelings are no longer willing to take a chance on granting concessions such as the ERA or unrestricted abortions in the hope that these will quiet women and keep us from fighting for more.

How can we win ERA today? Certainly not by relying on the election of pro-ERA Democrats and Republicans. This has been the general approach followed by the leadership of the National Organization for Women (NOW).

There is no such thing as a pro-ERA Democratic or Republican party politician. These politicians follow the orders of the capitalist class, and the orders are to kill ERA.

Instead, women's rights organizations and other ERA supporters need to look to powerful allies in the labor movement.

The outcome of battles between the unions and the employers directly affects the fate of the ERA. The 1978 coal miners' strike, for example, helped create the kind of political climate in which 100,000-strong demonstration for the ERA could take place last July 9.

The miners' refusal to let their union be destroyed and their defiance of the government's back-to-work drive strengthened both the unions and all those fighting exploitation. Their strike inspired women and the labor movement to turn out in force July 9.

If the ERA is to be won, NOW and other women's organizations must deepen their ties to the union movement.

Though currently hamstrung by a conservative bureaucracy, the unions are the only institutions specifically designed to represent the interests of working people against the employers on all fronts. They are potentially the most powerful social instruments that exist. They have the numbers, organization, and political and economic power to bring about changes. Joined with women's rights organizations, the unions can force ratification of the ERA.



New Jersey trade unionists protest gas shortage. ERA movement can be strengthened by new willingness of labor to fight.

Although the July 9 demonstration at the time proved highly successful in winning extension of the ERA deadline, today more is at stake than the question of whether to have another action. To win the ERA, women need an alliance with the labor movement and an orientation to reaching out to the masses of working women and men.

Unfortunately, building an alliance that can mobilize the full potential of labor and the women's movement is not the approach held either by the NOW leadership or the trade-union officialdom.

Both advocate horsetrading votes between Democrats and Republicans under the guise of rewarding friends and punishing enemies.

This was the approach taken at the October 17, 1978, meeting on political action initiated by United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser and attended by officials of various labor, women's, civil rights, and liberal reform organizations. Eleanor Smeal, president of NOW, participated.

Although dubbed by Fraser as the "beginning of what must be a broad, grass roots movement with fresh initiatives to fight back against reactionaries who today possess so much momentum," the meeting sought to circumvent such a development by harnessing protests into support for the Democratic Party in the name of "reforming" it.

Fraser called this shopworn strategy "the transformation of the Democratic Party into a genuinely progressive people's party . . . struggling against the reactionary capitalist money power of the Republicans."

Potentially tremendous power existed at that meeting. The organizations represented there could have formed the most powerful alliance against big-business and its government in the history of this country. Fraser could have called upon labor to break with its support to the two capitalist parties

and build its own independent party, based on the power of the unions.

This was not what the leadership of the organizations meeting in Detroit wanted to see happen. But it is the direction in which growing numbers of trade unionists—and women—are looking.

NOW & labor

NOW members' desire to forge a real alliance with the labor movement was shown in the overwhelming approval at NOW's 1978 national conference for a labor resolution.

The resolution pledged to cooperate "with the organized labor movement on our common goals and against our common enemies."

It urged NOW to back union organizing efforts; to work to defeat right-to-work laws; to support women workers fighting sex discrimination on the job; and to join the fight against the *Weber* decision.

The resolution called on NOW chapters and state bodies to form labor task forces and for a national conference on Women in Unions and Worksite Organizing.

Carrying out this perspective can greatly strengthen NOW in its fight for the ERA. It can help win union women to join NOW. It points toward reaching out and involving the unions in rallies, speak-outs, and demonstrations for the ERA. Special efforts to involve groups such as the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), and women's caucuses and civil rights committees in the unions should be part of such a campaign.

If NOW takes these steps, women in the unions and in the work force as a whole will look to NOW, join the organization, and strengthen it. This will help inspire the entire labor movement to join the battle for women's equality and strike a powerful blow against the capitalist offensive.

Va. unions call ERA strategy conference

By Matilde Zimmermann

Major labor organizations in the state of Virginia are sponsoring a conference in support of the Equal Rights Amendment in Norfolk, Virginia, August 12.

Among the sponsors of the ERA Conference are the Virginia State AFL-CIO, United Auto Workers Region 8, United Mine Workers District 28, Teamsters Joint Councils 55 and 83, and the Virginia Education Association. In addition, the conference has been endorsed by the Coalition of Labor Union Women and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

The Norfolk Central Labor Council unanimously passed and sent to other Virginia CLCs a resolution calling itself "the host Council for this important conference," and promising to "actively build and publicize the conference."

The August 12 conference developed out of the activity of Labor for

Equal Rights Now (LERN), which sponsored a pro-ERA demonstration on January 22, 1978, in Richmond, Virginia. The 1978 march and rally was the first labor-initiated demonstration for the ERA and attracted over 3,000 unionists and other ERA supporters.

According to Jerry Gordon of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, who is one of the key organizers of the conference, several meetings of Virginia unionists have been held this spring to make plans for the conference.

The August 12 conference is being held in Norfolk, which is in the Tidewater area, the most heavily unionized part of the state. Half an hour away is Newport News, where Steelworkers have been fighting for recognition of their union at the huge Tenneco shipyard there.

The ERA conference is attracting

interest from unionists throughout Virginia, and also from other states. Unionists in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C., are discussing how to maximize participation from their areas.

Keynote speakers at the conference will include NOW President Eleanor Smeal, Marsha Zakowski of the Civil Rights Department of the United Steelworkers, and Charles Hayes of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters, who is vice-president of CBTU. The conference will also discuss action proposals and resolutions.

The conference will begin at 9:00 a.m. August 12, at the Holiday Inn in Norfolk, and last until 5:00 p.m. There is a \$10.00 registration fee, which includes lunch. For more information, or to register for the conference, write to Labor ERA Conference, 5240 Port Royal Road, Suite 213, Springfield, Virginia 22151.



Trade unionists march for ERA in Virginia, January 1978.

Quote unquote

"Nobody believes the shortage business. It's the biggest rejection of an official explanation I've seen since Vietnam."

—U.S. Rep. Thomas Foley, chairman of House Democratic Caucus

ANTI-WEBER MARCH

A march against the Weber decision is set for Washington, D.C., June 2. Brian Weber is a white worker who claims that an affirmative-action plan negotiated by his union is "reverse racism." His plea is presently under consideration by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The march is scheduled to start at noon at Farragut Square and end at the Capitol. Other protests are scheduled around the country.

Some of the groups sponsoring the action include the National Lawyers Guild, District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, New York National Organization for Women, and Black United Front in Philadelphia.

CONTINGENT FOR PUERTO RICAN PRISONERS

A contingent in the Puerto Rican Day parade in New York City June 10 will demand an immediate and unconditional pardon for four Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners. Irving Flores, Oscar Collazo, Rafael Cancel, and Lolita Lebrón have been held in federal prisons for more than a quarter of a century.

The Puerto Rican Senate and several former governors of the U.S. colony have called for a pardon. Numerous demonstrations have made clear that the Puerto Rican people want immediate freedom for the Nationalists.

The New York City contingent will assemble at West Forty-fourth Street at Fifth Avenue. It is organized by the Committee of Proud Puerto Ricans for the Freedom of the Nationalists.

WOMEN MINERS TO MEET

West Virginia University in Institute (outside Charleston) will host the first conference of women coal miners June 8-10.

The conference will open Friday evening at 7 p.m. with the film *Harlan County USA*. The

Grain blasts bosses' fault

Profit-maximizing practices by grain elevator operators were responsible for many of the fatal explosions in the past two years, a U.S. Department of Agriculture panel said May 28.

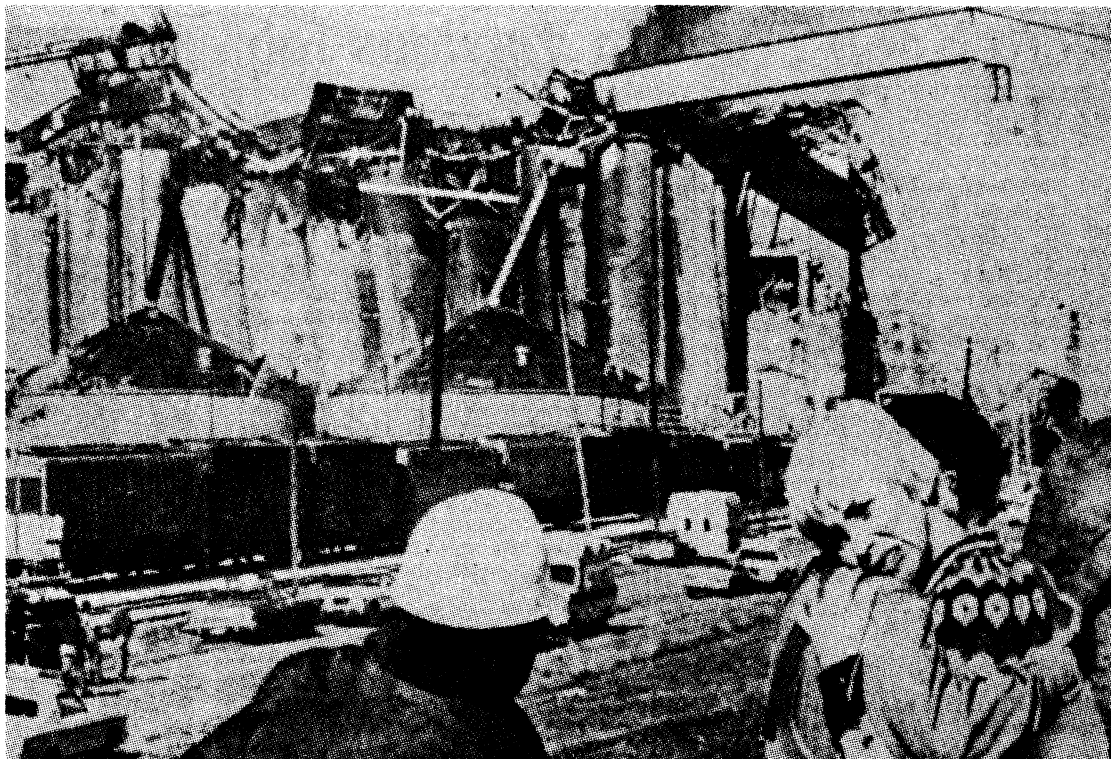
At least 85 people have been killed and more than 200 injured since late 1978 in grain elevator explosions.

The panel found that most of the explosions could have been prevented if the operators had not returned minute particles of grain, husks, and dirt, known as "dust," to the wheat and corn prior to shipment. The dust adds to the weight of the shipment and slightly increases its value. Returning the dust

also keeps operating costs down.

Dust is highly explosive when dry.

The panel said many big grain elevator operators were continuing to retain the dust, despite the recommendations of an industry-government committee last year.



With shattered grain elevator in background, relative of a victim is comforted. Thirty-five people died in blast.

welcoming session Saturday morning will feature a keynote address by a woman who worked in the mines during World War II.

Workshops all day Saturday and Sunday morning will focus on the problems and concerns of women miners, including maternity benefits, affirmative action, sex discrimination, and harassment on the job. A special workshop on "How to get jobs in coal" will be held. The conference is sponsored by the Coal Employment Project (CEP) and is open to all coal miners and women trying to get jobs in coal. Last year CEP filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charging 153 coal companies with sex discrimination. In the first settlement to date, Consolidation Coal, the nation's second-largest coal producer, agreed to hire one woman out of every five entry level positions.

For more information or to register, contact the Coal Em-

ployment Project, Box 3403, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 38830; Telephone: (615) 482-3428.

RADIOACTIVE WATER DUMPING HALTED

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has temporarily banned the dumping of 500,000 gallons of radioactive water into the Susquehanna River from the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant.

The May 25 order came in response to public outcry over the plans of Metropolitan Edison, operator of the crippled plant, to purify the water and dump it in the river. The city of Lancaster, downriver from Three Mile Island, and the Susquehanna Alliance had filed a federal court challenge to the dumping plan.

The water can't be dumped before an environmental impact report is completed.

Met Ed asserted that the water could be cleaned up enough to dump. But this was too much even for a local repre-

sentative, Republican Robert Walker. "Your credibility on your ability to clean that water is totally nil," he told Herman Dieckamp, president of General Public Utilities, which owns Met Ed.

TWO DIE IN CHEMICAL BLAST

Two workers were killed and 101 injured in an explosion at a Dow Chemical Company plant in Pittsburg, California, May 26.

Injured workers told reporters there had been numerous leaks at the plant in the past three weeks, and that five workers had become ill. Dow told them it was just "twenty-four hour flu."

An official of the one union at the plant charged that the alarm system was inadequate and that a poorly tested chemi-

cal mixture caused the explosion.

"This won't be left lying," declared Monte Manwill, business manager of Local 16 of the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbesto Workers.

ENGLEHARD'S NAME WON'T BE ON LIBRARY

Bowing to the pressure of months of student protests, Harvard University announced May 27 it would not name a new library after Charles Englehard, a millionaire industrialist and staunch supporter of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Besides vast holdings in South African minerals, diamonds, and gold, Englehard organized bank loans for the South African government after its police shot down seventy-three Blacks in 1960 and foreign capital began to flee.

NERVE GAS LEAKS

Two nerve gas containers scheduled to be moved by the Army from Colorado to Utah have been found to be leaking. The army planned to move 896 canisters. The move has drawn widespread opposition in Utah.

MIGRANT EDUCATION URGED BY NEA

The National Education Association has urged Congress to make higher education available to migrant farm workers.

In testimony before a House subcommittee, the 1.8 million-member teachers' union declared that despite token federal programs, the migrant farm worker is still "almost an unseen person" and is "minimally included" in governmental education projects.

There are, the NEA said, an estimated 800,000 migrant-worker children in the nation, of whom more than half, 422,000, are of elementary and high school age. Many of them work side by side with their parents in the fields.

The average migrant's schooling is five years, the testimony said, as against ten years for the rest of the population.

Less than 10 percent of migrant farm-worker youth graduate from high school.

The NEA urged legislation to fund higher education for migrants.

2,000 protest McNamara award

By Kim Kleinman

CHICAGO—Two thousand people rallied in protest here May 22 as former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara received from University of Chicago President Hanna Gray the first Albert Pick Award for "international understanding."

McNamara was defense secretary during a major part of the Vietnam War. He is currently head of the World Bank.

The award caused deep resentment on campus.

"It is wrong to think he has only Vietnamese victims," said Eqbal Ahmad, speaking at the rally. Ahmad is a senior fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies. "I can't think of anyone from Ford workers in the factory to Chileans to Viet-

namese to Indonesians to Dominicans who are not victims of Robert McNamara."

Other speakers included disabled Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic, exiled South African poet Dennis Brutus, and antiwar activist Sid Lens.

Many placards at the protest opposed attempts to reimpose the draft. Members of the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party carried a banner reading "No to the draft—no more Vietnams." They distributed a statement by YSA National Chairperson Cathy Sedwick against the draft.

After the rally, twenty-five people, including Kovic, were arrested for sitting in the street and demanding a debate with McNamara.

What's Going On

FLORIDA MIAMI

NO NUKES! A SOCIALIST SOLUTION TO THE ENERGY CRISIS. Speaker: Bill Rayson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 8, 8 p.m. 8171 N.E. Second Ave. Donation: \$1.25. Aup: Militant Forum. For more information call (305) 756-8358.

MARYLAND BALTIMORE

USWA VS. WEBER: THREAT TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION. Speakers: U.S. Rep. Parren Mitchell; Joseph Kotelchuck, Pres. USWA Local 2610; David Wilson, Pres. USWA Local 2609; Lee Douglas, former chairperson Steelworkers & Shipyard Workers for Equality; William Simons, Pres. AFT Local 6; Isidore Booker;

chairperson Civil Rights Committee USWA Local 13000, Kaiser Chalmette Plant, La.; Cynthia Hawkins, who lost training job at Kaiser. Wed., June 6, 7:30 p.m. Steelworkers Hall, 550 Dundalk Ave. Aup: Civil Rights & Women's Committees USWA Locals 2609 and 2610. For more information call (301) 633-9220.

MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

IS THE GOVERNMENT REALLY INTERESTED IN NUCLEAR SAFETY? Speaker: Steve Stalos, former manager of safety at Hanford, Wash., nuclear facility, who recently quit over the government's refusal to enforce safety regulations. Fri., June 8, 8 p.m. 510 Commonwealth Ave. Donation: \$1.50. Aup: Militant Forum. For more information call (617) 262-4621.

NEW YORK ALBANY

HOW TO STOP NUCLEAR POWER: WHY UNIONS SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD. Speakers: to be announced. Fri., June 8, 8 p.m. 103 Central Ave. Donation: \$1.50. Aup: Militant Forum. For more information call (518) 463-0072.

PENNSYLVANIA PITTSBURGH

'EUGENE DEBS AND THE AMERICAN MOVEMENT.' A film. Speaker: Mark McCulloch, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 8, 8 p.m. 1210 E. Carson St. Donation: \$1.00. Aup: Militant Forum. For more information call (412) 488-7000.

NUCLEAR TEST RESIDUE FORCES EVACUATION

High levels of radioactivity discovered in animals forced the evacuation of about twelve Mississippi families from their homes near a former nuclear weapons test site May 25. Tests found radiation levels at 1,000 times normal in one frog.

Scientists found deformed toads, frogs, and lizards in the area, known as the Tatum Salt Dome. It was the scene of nuclear tests in the 1960s.

Gov. Cliff Finch "reassured" people by telling them the radioactivity posed no danger to area residents unless they ate contaminated wildlife or drank contaminated water.

Fifty-year-old Ola Saul said she hadn't been worried about nuclear contamination during the tests. "But I had a lot more faith in the government then than I have now. Right now I have zero," she told a reporter.

NEW TUITION HIKES

The tiny workers' state of Cuba provides tuition-free education, plus generous scholarships through the university level.

But in the U.S. it's becoming impossible for more and more people from working-class families to go to college.

This year the average cost for residential students at private colleges will go up 10.6 percent—for a total of \$5,526 a year. At public four-year colleges, the cost will be \$3,258, an 8.5 percent hike.

Hardest hit in terms of per-

centage increase will be commuter students at private four-year colleges. Their total costs will be \$4,977, up 15.8 percent from the current year. Public two- and four-year colleges will increase costs for commuter students as much as 13 percent.

Harvard, Yale, Sarah Lawrence, and Bennington (which is the most expensive) will break the \$9,000-a-year mark.

Commented an education official, "I don't see any abatement ahead."

CONCERN GROWS OVER PRIVACY INVASIONS

Two-thirds of those queried in a recent Harris poll responded that they were "very" or "somewhat" concerned over threats to their privacy. In a similar poll, eleven months earlier, only 47 percent responded this way.

Three of four surveyed urged measures to insure privacy as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.

According to the pollsters, the most immediate concern was the snooping by business organizations—such as banks and finance companies.

Thirty-eight percent saw the IRS as a threat to privacy and 33 percent pointed to the FBI and CIA.

More than 60 percent opposed illegal police surveillance of organizations, and nearly half felt the police should not be permitted to plant informers in organizations without a court order.

The Great Society

Harry Ring



Prediction—To deal with the problem of pumps that won't register over 99.9 cents, New York gas stations are being allowed to post prices by the half-gallon. And, we anticipate, when it goes above \$1.99 they'll start listing the price by the ounce. Which may also be the way a lot of people will have to buy it.

They don't miss a trick—To ease the strain of waiting in gas lines, Los Angeles's Broadway department store suggests portable TVs to plug into the dashboard lighter socket. \$140 to \$300.

Drastic, perhaps, but . . .—Anyone who thinks the federal Energy Department isn't grappling with the problem should consider its recent advice: "Save energy needed for ironing by hanging clothes in the bathroom while you're bathing or showering. The steam often removes the wrinkles for you."

Don't call us . . .—Three days after the giant May 6 antinuclear demonstration in Washington, the Bank of America announced it had called a halt to lending money for the construction of nuclear plants. Bank officers said they want to see how things shake out. It termed its action, "like pushing the hold button on a telephone."

A good question—"If Mobil isn't going to defend Mobil, then who is?"—The director of Mobil's \$5-million-a-year "advertising" series.

Anybody and everybody—The chair-

man of Exxon denied that this year's first-quarter profits of \$955 million (compared to \$695 the same period last year) were the result of ripping off U.S. consumers. It was Europeans they ripped off. An exceptionally cold winter there, he explained, boosted sales nicely. Not to speak of prices.

Heavy Collateral—The General Public Utilities Corporation, left short by the mishap at its Three Mile Island nuclear plant, is seeking a \$400 million short-term loan. It's offering its uranium stockpile as security.

DUNAGIN'S PEOPLE



'So that's how the odd-even gas rationing plan works? . . . on odd days, you can't buy it, and on even days, you can't afford it.'

Blacks hit police murder



Militant/Nelson Blackstock
Alabama Blacks march to protest cop murder of Robert Lee Davis.

By Nelson Blackstock

HUEYTOWN, Ala.—More than 150 young Blacks marched through the streets of this Birmingham suburb May 24 to protest the police murder of Robert Lee Davis.

Davis was shot to death April 6 when Hueytown policemen came to his house following an argument over an automobile accident. Refusing to produce an arrest warrant, the cops broke into the house and shot Davis.

Bernice Davis said later, "They wouldn't let me go with my husband to the hospital. My daughter started screaming, asking to go with her daddy. They said, 'You shut up, you whore.' They pushed my pregnant daughter down the steps and hit her in the back with a gun."

During a march in Hueytown last week, Bernice Davis collapsed and died of a

heart attack. The two children left behind will be consigned to foster homes.

Addressing a rally in front of the Hueytown city hall were Southern Christian Leadership Conference National President Dr. Joseph Lowery, SCLC state president Rev. John Nettles, and Birmingham SCLC president Rev. Abraham Woods, Jr.

Following the rally marchers paused at the spot where Bernice Davis had collapsed.

On the night of May 28, more than 125 people rallied at the Mount Moriah Church here as part of the continuing protest around Davis's death.

Leaders say they will continue actions until police responsible for the murder are dismissed and Blacks are hired by the police force.

Capitalism Fouls Things Up

Chemicals and cancer

The following is a guest column by Dean Denno.

The U.S. economy currently makes use of about 50,000 different chemicals. They are used in every part of the economy and for almost every conceivable purpose. About 1,000 new chemicals are introduced every year. Hundreds are known to cause cancer in test animals, but the overwhelming majority have never been tested.

Working people are kept in ignorance because the corporations which make and use these chemicals fear our knowing anything—and because they simply consider it too expensive to make the necessary studies.

Occasionally, however, the truth slips out. A particular chemical causes cancer or has other serious effects.

Then the government steps in. First, it attempts to minimize and cover up the danger. Then it makes laws and regulations to ensure that those responsible do not have to pay the costs of their crimes.

A good example of this is the widespread use of asbestos since World War II. Huge quantities of asbestos have been used in construction, especially in schools and in shipbuilding. Several years ago it became known that breathing asbestos can cause cancer and other lung diseases. (In fact, the asbestos producers have known this since the 1930s.)

Millions of workers now face the possibility of death or disability because they worked in government-run shipyards or in other places where asbestos was used. What has been the government's response?

First, it set allowable exposure limits which were too high for safety. Then it failed to enforce even these standards.

And now that the danger is widely known and many workers are suing for damage to their health, the government is attempting to clear the asbestos industry of responsibility.

A bill in Congress would require the federal government to pay off all asbestos-related product liability claims of U.S. citizens, and to pay all past and current workers compensation claims for asbestos-related illness. The workers compensation claims alone are estimated to total \$1.5-1.7 billion.

The possibility that a chemical may cause cancer is generally not even considered in setting the allowable exposure limits for workers who must handle the material. In the case of ethylene dichloride, widely used in plastics and as a solvent and gasoline additive, the legally allowable level in the air which workers breathe is enough to cause cancer in half of the rats or mice in a test. The same is true of the pesticide DBCP.

And, of course, exposure to these deadly substances is not limited to the workers who make or use them. Recently, 168 Canadians were tested for the presence of eleven different pesticides, most of which can cause cancer. Six of the eleven pesticides were found in every single person tested. The other five were found in 26 to 99 percent of the individuals. There is simply no escape from these poisons.

Both the employers and their government have shown they are interested only in using chemicals for profit. They will not protect our health. The labor movement should demand the right to control the use of chemicals in the workplace and the right to decide which substances are safe for human contact.

Cuba, Iran, & imperialism

The U.S. Senate, which never had a word to say about the torture and execution of thousands of Iranians under the shah's dictatorship, has not been able to bear the sight of the shah's murderers being brought to justice. It passed a unanimous resolution May 17 condemning the executions in Iran.

Editorials in the capitalist press have joined in denouncing what the *New York Times* called "kangaroo komitehs."

A similar reaction in Congress and the big-business media occurred twenty years ago, following the victory of the Cuban revolution.

In Cuba, as in Iran, the murderers and torturers of the ousted dictatorship were rounded up. "Trials of these criminals are being held throughout Cuba and many have already been executed," Lillian Kiezel reported in the January 19, 1959, issue of the *Militant*.

"Senator Morse . . . called for cessation of the executions. He declared that this is not the way the new regime will 'win the support of free men and women around the world.'"

Kiezel described the way the Cuban revolutionaries responded in the following issue of the *Militant*.

"From all corners of the island 600,000 Cubans rallied in Havana Jan. 21 in response to the call of Fidel Castro. Their banners read: 'Revolutionary justice for the assassins.' 'Extradition of war criminals from the United States.' 'Yankees go home.' Roaring greetings to Castro, they also roared approval of the military trials of [former dictator Fulgencio] Batista's henchmen who had murdered and tortured their people.

"Resentment is high in Cuba over criticism in Congress of the summary justice. Well-known liberals . . . who claim they were critical of the Batista regime, are opposing what they call a 'bloodbath' . . .

"In reply, Castro invited the critical Congressmen along with 400 officials and newspapermen from the U.S., Canada, Britain and Latin America to witness the Havana trials of some 600 prisoners."

Answering the hypocritical attacks on the revolutionary government, Castro declared: "The American silence on the crimes of the Batista regime has made the present criticism of executions here offensive and dangerous for Cuban-American relations."

Castro pointedly noted that the U.S. government provided bombs to Batista's regime and that the "United States Military Mission continued to instruct Batista's soldiers" during the fight against the dictatorship.

Writing in the February 2, 1959, *Militant*, Kiezel said: "The hysterical outcry in Congress and the press that the Cuban revolution is a 'blood bath' merely reflects the opinion of Big Business that their interests are in jeopardy. In answer, Castro told the press in Havana that Ameri-



can officials are not concerned with human life: 'They are afraid of the effect that a free Cuba will have upon the rest of Latin America which has suffered so many indignities for so long.'"

Cuba's defiance of American imperialism was especially popular among Blacks in the United States. Prominent in the campaign against Cuba were racist ring-leaders such as Sen. John Sparkman of Alabama.

"Why is he so broken up over the just punishment of murderers here," one Cuban official asked, "when he remained so silent while White Citizens Councils and Klan bombers were blowing up the homes and churches and castrating the innocent colored people of Montgomery and Birmingham?"

John Young III, the correspondent of New York City's Black community daily, the *Amsterdam News*, said of Batista's rule: "Even persecuted Negro Americans will find it difficult to comprehend this suffering. . . .

"The Revolutionary Army and the whole population of Cuba, without speaking a word to each other, have decided that Batista and his leaders must never again rise to power. They believe that death—and only death—of the leaders can make this certain. . . ."

Despite the bitter protests of the imperialists, the Cuban people did make certain that Batista and his would-be successors could never return to power. Beginning with their resolute struggle against Batista and his imperialist supporters, the Cubans carried through a socialist revolution.

Referring to the hopes of the imperialists that the Cuban revolution would end with Castro's entry into Havana, the January 19, 1959, *Militant* declared in an editorial:

"What has ended is the dictatorial rule of a Wall Street puppet; what has begun is a social revolution that will move sooner or later towards the expropriation of imperialist property and capital, the nationalization of economy and the emergence of a labor movement with socialist consciousness and aims."

And that, of course, is precisely what Wall Street fears will happen in Iran as well.

—David Frankel

A suggestion

It seems to me that the special demand now being raised by the *Militant* that essential industries be converted into "public utilities—services that would be publicly owned and run by independent, democratically elected boards," [see

"Milwaukee Road moves to cut 5,000 rail jobs," May 18 *Militant*] while heading in the right direction doesn't go far enough.

Within the current electoral set-up with election laws that favor the two capitalist parties, and with the capitalist-controlled media that, except in rare circumstances, covers only the two parties, the call for independent, democratically elected boards would simply lead to boards of capitalist-controlled overseers.

Generally, the call for elections is better than the appointment of officials but because the crisis is so far advanced in these industries it seems to me we haven't time to call for general elections and then fight within a system rigged in favor of the two capitalist parties.

Why not call for the oil, gas, and coal companies, the electric utilities, and the railroads to be made really public by ownership and control being placed in the hands of councils elected by the trade unions; consumer organizations; women's, minority, and other grassroots organizations. This would be more likely to ensure that those elected act more directly in the interests of those they represent and it would allow for immediate recall if they didn't serve as they were

expected to by those who elected them. Election at-large would more likely lead to representatives not responsible [to the people] and who could be bought off by capitalists in other industries.

Glen Boatman
Toledo, Ohio

30 for 60?

I enjoy getting the *Militant* every week, and I especially enjoy some of the series you run on labor issues. Frank Lovell's series on the forty-hour workweek really hit home. After working eight consecutive fifty-five-plus-hour weeks, I wonder if we should change our demand to thirty hours' work for sixty hours pay. I would be interested in seeing a series on unions in the South and the right-to-work laws, which my background in Michigan makes very foreign to me. Keep up the excellent work.

Stanley Hills
Detroit, Michigan

Energy crisis

Just like workers all over the country, auto workers in Cleveland aren't buying the so-called gas shortage. It's a big topic of discussion in the plants here.

An older Black member of United Auto Workers Local 451 said, "You know, this stuff really makes me mad. Why don't they just raise the prices to whatever they're going to?" And a young Black woman who's a member of UAW Local 1747 said, "There's no way in the world there's really a fuel shortage. You need

Iranian official answers Senate

On May 17 the U.S. Senate passed a unanimous resolution condemning the new government in Iran for bringing to justice the shah's butchers.

In a letter to Sen. Jacob Javits dated May 22, Ali A. Agah, the representative of the Iranian government in Washington, responded to the chief sponsor of the Senate resolution. Agah assured Javits that despite the sensationalism of some reports in the press, 'neither the Government of Iran nor any person under its direction or control intends any physical harm toward you or to your family.'

Excerpts from Agah's reply to the Senate resolution, as provided by the Iranian Embassy, follow:

With respect to the text of your resolution, we consider it to be an unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of Iran, and we reject your intervention as being both ill-informed and ill-advised.

Iran is indeed the "oldest and most distinguished civilization in the world." The people of Iran, however, fully understand the relationship both you and members of your family had with the ex-Shah. That rela-

tionship explains your total silence all during the years of oppression, torture, and murder of the people of Iran by the ex-Shah. It also explains your haste to offer criticism—any criticism—of our Islamic revolution, even though it is based on false information and misimpressions in the American press.

Your double standard is both obvious and insulting. Where was your outrage all the years the Shah conducted his murderous activities? Where is your resolution condemning Israel's international terrorism, its international search and kidnapping of Nazis in countries around the world? Or do you consider crimes against Jews by Nazis to be punishable, but crimes against Iranians by the ex-Shah not to be punishable?

We have said before, and we wish to repeat, that relations will be normal between our two countries when we can deal on terms of mutual respect. But such conditions cannot exist when you persist in basing your actions on falsehoods, and when you talk down to us as though a free people, as we are, were still a colony of the United States, as it was when the ex-Shah was in power.

Ali A. Agah
Washington, D.C.

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Learning About Socialism

Engels on working farmers

a car, otherwise how can people get to work. They just want to raise prices.”

A *latina* in the same plant said, “They want to get the prices up to where they want them and then there will be plenty of gas. The unions should find a way to demand an investigation of these big corporations and find out the truth.”

Another Black member of Local 451 said, “I’ve thought for a long time that the oil industry should be nationalized. Mineral resources should be in the hands of the people, not used to make a profit. It looks like Carter’s completely on the side of the oil companies. And I don’t trust the Democratic Party either. Isn’t the Democratic Party in Texas completely controlled by the oil companies?”

*An auto worker
Cleveland, Ohio*

Wants to know

I’m a recent reader of the *Militant* so I don’t know what all you have covered in the past month/years but I would like to learn more about the real story on the “energy crisis.” Where is the Alaskan oil? Is there an actual shortage? What’s at the root of the current economic mess? I feel like I know bits and pieces—like huge corporate profits, banks, and credit manipulations at many levels—but I don’t know how they fit together.

*C.M.
Denver, Colorado*

On the Inco strike

In Stu Singer’s article on the Inco strike (*Militant*, May 18) he says that, “In an earlier strike Inco was successful in dividing the strikers by playing off wives against husbands.” I recently heard a talk by Meg Luxton from Toronto that investigated this common memory of that strike twenty years ago.

What actually happened was that hundreds of pro-strike wives originally organized a pro-strike wives demonstration, but then called it off when they feared it would be co-opted. The owners and the city officials blocked the call-off notice and held a very confused meeting in which they used the anti-strike sentiment of two or three women to spread the lie that the wives opposed the strike. The women were not organized enough to counter this propaganda. Today, the women are better organized, more conscious, and their work has helped keep the strike strong.

*Seth Wigderson
Detroit, Michigan*

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

The question of what policy the labor movement should have toward agriculture and farmers is an important one and, in light of recent protests by working farmers in this country, a timely one. Adopting the wrong approach would prove disastrous.

Ever since the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union forcibly collectivized the peasants in the early 1930’s the capitalist rulers have told working farmers, “This is what the socialists will do here if they take over.”

But there are also positive examples, totally contrary to the reactionary Stalinist policy. Both the Bolshevik leadership during the early years of the Russian revolution and the Castro leadership in Cuba distributed land to working farmers or permitted them to keep the land they were already farming. In both cases, the revolutionary governments took measures to help the farmers (canceling mortgages, lowering taxes, providing seeds, fertilizer, etc.)

This was also the approach that Frederick Engels thought socialists should fight for to forge an alliance between the working class and working farmers, or ‘small peasants’ as he calls them. The following excerpts are from the article, “The Peasant Question in France and Germany,” that Engels wrote in 1894, a few months before he died. It can be found in ‘Marx and Engels: Selected Works.’

The bourgeois and reactionary parties greatly wonder why everywhere among Socialists the peasant question has now suddenly been placed upon the order of the day. What they should be wondering at, by rights, is that this has not been done long ago.

Since the rise of the working-class movement in Western Europe, particularly in those parts where small peasant holdings predominate, it has not been particularly difficult for the bourgeoisie to render the socialist workers suspicious and odious in the minds of the peasants as *partageux*, as people who want to “divide up,” as lazy greedy city dwellers who have an eye on the property of the peasants.

But in order to conquer political power [the Socialist Party] must first go from the towns to the country, must become a power in the countryside. This party, which has an advantage over all others in that it possesses a clear insight into the interconnections between economic causes and political effects and long ago described the wolf in sheep’s clothing of the big landowner, that importunate friend of the peasant—may this party calmly leave the doomed peasant in the hands of his false protectors until he has been transformed from a passive into an active opponent of the industrial workers?

Let us begin with the small peasant. Not only is he, of all peasants, the most important for Western Europe in general, but he is also the critical case that decides the entire

question. Once we have clarified in our minds our attitude to the small peasant we have all the data needed to determine our stand relative to the other constituent parts of the rural population.

By small peasant we mean here the owner or tenant—particularly the former—of a patch of land no bigger, as a rule, than he and his family can till, and no smaller than can sustain the family. This small peasant, just like the small handicraftsman, is therefore a toiler who differs from the modern proletarian in that he still possesses his instruments of labor; hence a survival of a past mode of production.

Taxes, crop failures, divisions of inheritance and litigations drive one peasant after another into the arms of the usurer; the indebtedness becomes more and more general and steadily increases in amount in each case—in brief, our small peasant, like every other survival of a past mode of production, is hopelessly doomed. He is a future proletarian.

As such he ought to lend a ready ear to socialist propaganda. But he is prevented from doing so for the time being by his deeprooted sense of property. The more difficult it is for him to defend his endangered patch of land the more desperately he clings to it, the more he regards the Social-Democrats, who speak of transferring landed property to the whole of society, as just as dangerous a foe as the usurer and lawyer. How is the Social-Democracy to overcome this prejudice? What can it offer to the doomed small peasant without becoming untrue to itself?

When we are in possession of state power we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regardless of whether with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task relative to the small peasant consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private possession to co-operative ones, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose. . . . We may thus possibly be in a position to offer these cooperatives assumption of their entire mortgage indebtedness by the national bank with a simultaneous sharp reduction of the interest rate; advances from public funds for the establishment of large-scale production (to be made not necessarily or primarily in money but in the form of required products: machinery, artificial fertiliser, etc.), and other advantages.

We of course are decidedly on the side of the small peasant. We do this not only because we consider the small peasant living by his own labour as virtually belonging to us, [i.e., as part of the toiling masses] but also in the direct interest of the Party. The greater the number of peasants whom we can save from being actually hurled down into the proletariat, whom we can win to our side while they are still peasants, the more quickly and easily the social transformation will be accomplished.

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State of Florida murders John Spenkelink

Stop capitalist drive for more executions

By Suzanne Haig

In a brutal display of ruling-class "justice" against working people who fall into the clutches of the law, the state of Florida electrocuted John Spenkelink, on Friday, May 25. Spenkelink, thirty, was the son of an Iowa farmer.

This grisly act came five days after ex-cop Dan White, who gunned down Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk in San Francisco, got off with a maximum sentence of seven years and eight months.

Millard Farmer, Spenkelink's lawyer, labeled the execution "a terrorist attack on the part of the government against poor and minorities all over the country."

Willie Darden, a Black man sentenced to die soon after Spenkelink, was granted a last-minute stay of execution. Blacks and *latinos* make up almost 50 percent of the victims on the nation's death rows.

Spenkelink put up a strong legal fight against the state's drive to kill him. He called the death penalty murder. His mother supported his fight, appealing for clemency on numerous occasions and demonstrating to save his life.

Amnesty International and the American Civil Liberties Union urged Florida Gov. Robert Graham to spare Spenkelink.

And about 400 people demonstrated outside the prison on May 23, the date originally scheduled for his execution.

On May 12 in Atlanta a march against the death penalty drew 1,000. And there were protestors at the prison and in Washington, D.C., when the execution took place.

A striking aspect of the fight to save Spenkelink's life was the participation of prisoners at Florida State Prison in Starke, where Spenkelink was murdered. Prisoners staged a hunger strike



Demonstrators outside Florida State Prison joined prisoners inside in protesting Spenkelink's execution.

to protest the impending execution.

On May 23, when Spenkelink was originally to be electrocuted, about 150 prisoners banged on their cell bars and hung flaming bedsheets out of the windows to express their anger.

Thomas Slaughter, one of nine reporters who witnessed the execution, said prisoners shouted opposition to the legal murder from a cell block above the death chamber.

The issue in Florida was not deter-

ring crime or punishing the guilty. Frank Brumm, accused of the same killing for which Spenkelink was convicted, turned state's evidence and won acquittal. Spenkelink, who insisted on his innocence, was killed. "It isn't fair," Brumm said of the execution.

The official murderers did have a cheering section at the prison site on May 25, a clique of right-wingers holding placards reading, "Go, Sparky"—their nickname for the elect-

ric chair.

When it sent the current through John Spenkelink's body, the ruling class wanted the message to be clear. To protect the capitalist system of poverty, racism, unemployment, and brutality that breeds crime, the employing class will use every available weapon—the courts, the cops, the prisons, and the death penalty. This drive to restore barbaric capital punishment must be stopped.

Rail unions protest Milwaukee Road cuts

By Bill Peterson

MINNEAPOLIS—Enthusiasm is building up here for the June 5 union-sponsored protest against the threatened liquidation of the Milwaukee Road. With thousands of rail workers' jobs threatened and possible damage to farmers who depend on the rail line, the spirit of protests against the Milwaukee is running high.

Plans which would liquidate all or part of the Milwaukee Road are presently being considered in a federal court in Chicago. There are also bills in Congress which might delay the threatened shutdown. So far only a Senate resolution delaying the liquidation for forty-five days beginning June 1 has actually been passed in Washington.

On Friday, May 25, railroad workers

hit the yards here with 2,000 leaflets calling for the June 5 protest. There were none left by Sunday.

The flier is headlined: "Public forum in protest of the Milwaukee Road bankruptcy and its drastic consequences for employees and others."

It lists the featured speaker, Kendall Gustafson. Gustafson is a Milwaukee Road employee in Portland, Oregon, who sent out nationally over the company's Teletype machine a detailed breakdown of the financial manipulations involved in the bankruptcy.

The leaflet also lists the five United Transportation Union locals which are sponsoring the meeting so far. They include the UTU locals on the Milwaukee Road, Burlington Northern, Chicago & Northwestern, Soo Line and Minneapolis Transfer. Other sponsors include Charlie Wilson, secretary and local chairperson of UTU Local 263; Don Cohrs, president of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, Local 1442; and Tom Carter, chairperson of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks Local 325.

As soon as the fliers hit, workers began talking enthusiastically about what we can do to fight the elimination of our jobs.

On the rip track in St. Paul fifteen carmen gathered around talking about the meeting. They told leafleters to make sure their local was put on the next flier, that they were all coming. Clerks in the yard office wanted to know why their local wasn't listed.

While the liquidation plans continue to be bottled up in court, workers are asking: What if Congress eventually lets our jobs liquidate? How long can a core railroad (if the Milwaukee Road is honed down to a smaller size) survive? What kind of job protection can we get from Congress?

And rather than sit idly by depending on congressional action—as the UTU national officials implore—these railroad workers are looking forward to June 5 and actively building it.

Supporters have handed up bundles of leaflets to outbound transcontinental freights, so you may see the flier

before this article.

Milwaukee Road management had a different response. The assistant terminal manager here saw the fliers all over the yard when he came to work Friday morning.

The manager immediately ordered his trainmasters to confiscate the leaflets. But he was met with stiff resistance. Charlie Wilson, a leader of the protest movement and longtime chairman of the engineers' local, called the manager back.

"Put those leaflets back up," said Wilson. "They are the property of the union. The union paid from them and they belong on the union bulletin board."

Management had to retreat, because, you see, this is official union business!

The meeting will be held at 7 p.m., at the United Labor Center, 312 Central Avenue, N.E., in Minneapolis. Letters of support should be sent to Secretary, United Transportation Union Local 911, 3232 Karth Road, St. Paul, Minnesota 55110.

Bill Peterson is a member of United Transportation Union Local 911 representing train service employees of the Milwaukee Road in Minneapolis and St. Paul.